

# PROPOSITIONS

CONCERNING THE

## Subject of Baptism

AND

### CONSOCIATION of CHURCHES;

Collected and Confirmed out of the Word of God,

BY A

## SYNOD of ELDERS

AND

### MESSENGERS of the CHURCHES

*in Massachusetts-Colony in New-England.*

Assembled at BOSTON, according to the Appointment of the Honoured  
GENERAL COURT, In the Year, 1662.

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At a General Court held at Boston in New-England, the Eighth  
of October, 1662.

**T**He Court having Read over this Result of the Synod, judge meet to Com-  
mend the same unto the Consideration of all the Churches and People of  
this Jurisdiction; and for that end do Order the Printing thereof.

C. 2034

By the Court, Edward Rawson, Secret.

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Whereunto is annexed the ANSWER of the DISSSENTING  
BRETHREN and MESSENGERS of the Churches of  
New-England, &c.

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Printed in the Year, 1662.



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# THE P R E F A C E

TO THE  
CHRISTIAN READER;

And especially to the Churches of Massachusetts-Colony  
in NEW-ENGLAND.

**T**hat one end designed by God's All-disposing Providence, leading so many of his poor people into this Wilderness, was to lead them unto a distinct discerning and practise of all the Wayes and Ordinances of his House, according to Scripture pattern, may seem an Observation not to be despised. That we are fit or able for so great a Service, the sense of our own feebleness forbids us to think. But that we have large and great opportunity for it, none will deny. For, besides the useful Labours and Contemplations of many of the Lords Worthies in other places, and in former times, contributing to our Help, and shewing our Principles to be neither novel nor singular, the advantage of Experience and Practise, and the occasion thereby given for daily searching into the Rule, is considerable. And he that hath made the path of the just as the shining Light, is wont still to give unto them further Light, as the progress of their path requires further Practise, making his Word a Lanthorn to their feet, to shew them their Way from step to step, though haply sometimes they may not see far before them. It is matter of humbling to us, that we have made no better improvement of our Opportunities this way: but some Fruits God hath given, and is to be praised for.

In former years, and while sundry of the Lords, eminent Servants, now at rest from their Labours, were yet with us, A Platform of Church-Discipline, comprizing the brief sum thereof, especially in reference to the Constitution of Churches (which was our first work when we came into this Wilderness) was agreed upon by a Synod held at Cambridge, and published to the World: From which (as to the Substance thereof) we yet see no cause to recede. Some few particulars referring to the Continuation and Combination of Churches, needed yet a more explicate stating and reducing unto practise. For though the Principles thereof were included in what is already published, yet that there hath been a defect in practise (especially since of late years there was more occasion for it) is too too apparent: For the rectifying whereof, a more particular Explication of the Doctrine also about these things, is now necessary.



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*In order hereunto, by the Care and Wisdom of our Honoured General Court, calling upon all the Churches of this Colony, to send their Elders and Messengers, this Synod was assembled, who after earnest Supplications for Divine Assistance, having consulted the holy Scriptures touching the Questions proposed to them, have proceeded to the following Issue; hoping that if it might seem meet to the Father of Lights, to guide the Churches unto a right Understanding and Practice of his Will in these things also, the beauty of Christ's wayes and Spiritual Kingdom among us, would be seen in some more compleatness than formerly. For that which was the prayer of Epaphras for the Colossians, ought to be both the prayer and labour of us all; viz. That we might stand perfect and compleat in all the Will of God: And we trust it is our sincere desire, that his Will, all his Will, and nothing else but his Will, might be done among us. To the Law and to the Testimony we do wholly refer our selves, and if any thing in the following Conclusion, be indeed found not to speak according therunto, let it be rejected.*

*We are not ignorant that this our Labour will by divers be diversly censured; some will account us too strict in the Point of Baptism, and others too laxe and large: But let the Scriptures be Judge between us all. There are two things, the Honour whereof is in a special manner dear to God, and which he cannot endure to be wronged in; viz. His Holiness, and His Grace. The Scripture is often putting us in mind how much the Lord loveth Holiness, and that in his House, and in the holy Ordinances thereof, and how he abhorreth the contrary, Mal. 2. 11. Psal. 93. 5. & 2. 6. Lev. 11. 44, 45. Ezek. 22. 26. & 44. 7, 8. And hence neither dare we admit those unto the holy Table of the Lord, that are short of Scripture-qualifications for it; viz. Ability to examine themselves, and discern the Lords body; nor yet receive or retain those in Church-estate, and own them as a part of the Lords holy People, that are visibly and notoriously unholy, wicked and prophane; such we are bidden to put away from among us, 1 Cor. 5. 13. and therefore ought not to continue among us. Neither may we administer Baptism to those whose Parents are not under any Church-power or Government any where: To Baptize such, would be to give the Title and Livery to those that will not bear the yoke of Christs Disciples, and to put the holy Name of God upon them, touching whom we can have no tolerable security that they will be educated in the wayes of Holiness, or in the knowledge and practice of God's holy Will. Baptism, which is the Seal of Membership in the Church, the body of Christ, and an engaging Sign, importing us to be the devoted Subjects of Christ, and of all his holy Government, is not to be made a common thing, nor to be given to those, between whom and the Godless licentious world, there is no visible difference: This would be a provocation and dishonour to the Holy One of Israel.*

*On the other hand, we find in Scripture, that the Lord is very tender of his Grace; that he delighteth to manifest and magnifie the Riches of it, and that he*



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he cannot endure any straitning or eclipsing thereof, which is both dishonourable unto God, and injurious unto men, Gal. 2. 21. Eph. 2. 7. & 3. 2, 6, 8. Rom. 11. 1, 5. Acts 15. 10, 11. & 10, 15. & 20. 24, 26, 27. And in special he is large in the Grace of his Covenant, which he maketh with his visible Church and People, and tender of having the same straitned. Hence when he takes any into Covenant with himself, he will not only be their God, but the God of their Seed after them in their Generations, Gen. 17. 7, 9. And although the apostate wicked Parent (that rejecteth God and his Wayes,) do cut off both himself and his Children after him, Exod. 20. 5. & 34. 7. Yet the Mercy and Grace of the Covenant, is extended to the faithful and their Seed unto a thousand Generations, if the successive Parents do but in the least degree shew themselves to be lovers of God, and keepers of his Covenant and Commandments, so as that the Lord will never reject them till they reject him, Exod. 20. 6. Deut. 7. 9. Psal. 105. 8, 9. Rom. 11. 16--22. Hence we dare not (with the Antipedobaptist) exclude the Infant-children of the faithful from the Covenant, or from Membership in the visible Church, and consequently not from Baptism the Seal thereof. Neither dare we exclude the same Children from Membership (or put them out of the Church) when they are grown up, while they so walk and act, as to keep their standing in the Covenant, and do not reject the same. God owns them still, and they do in some measure own him: God rejects them not, and therefore neither may we; and consequently their Children also are not to be rejected. Should we reject or exclude any of these, we should shorten and straiten the grace of God's Covenant, more than God himself doth, and be injurious to the Souls of men, by putting them from under those Dispensations of Grace, which are stated upon the visibly Church, whereby the Children of God's visible people are successively in their Generations to be trained up for the Kingdom of Heaven (whither the Elect number shall still be brought in the way of such means) and wherein he hath given unto Officers and Churches a solemn charge to take care of, and train up such, as a part of his flock, to that end; saying to them, as sometimes to Peter, If you love me, feed my Lambs. In obedience to which charge we hope it is, that we are willing and desirous (though with the inference of no small labour and burthen to our selves) to commend these Truths to the Churches of Christ; that all the Flock, even the Lambs thereof, being duly stated under Pastoral Power, we might after a faithful discharge of our Duty to them, be able to give up our account another day with joy and not with grief.

How hard it is to find and keep the right middle way of Truth in these things, is known to all that are ought acquainted with the Controversies there-about. As we have learned and believed, we have spoken; but not without remembrance that we are poor feeble fraile men; and therefore desire to be conversant herein with much humility and fear before God and man. We are not ignorant of variety of Judgments concerning this Subject; which notwithstanding, with all due reverence



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reverence to Dissenters, after Religious search of the Scriptures, we have here offered what seems to us to have the fullest Evidence of Light from thence; if more may be added, and may be found contained in the Word of God, this shall be no prejudice thereunto. Hence also we are far from desiring that there should be any rigorous imposition of these things (especially as to what is more narrow therein, and more controversial among godly men.) If the Honoured Court see meet so far to add their countenance and concurrence, as to commend a serious consideration hereof to the Churches, and to secure those that can with clearness of Judgement practice accordingly, from disturbance, that in this case may be sufficient. To tolerate, or to desire a Toleration of Damnable Heresies, or of Subverters of the Fundamentals of Faith or Order, were an irreligious inconsistency with the love of true Religion: But to bear one with another in lesser differences, about matters of a more difficult and controversial nature, and more remote from the Foundation, and wherein the Godly-wise are not like-minded, is a Duty necessary to the peace and welfare of Religion, while we are in the state of Infirmary. In such things let not him that practiseth, despise him that forbeareth; and let not him that forbeareth, judge him that practiseth, for God hath received him.

But as we do not thus speak from doubting of the Truth here delivered (Paul knows where the Truth lies, and is perswaded of it, Rom. 14. 14. yet he can lovingly bear a Dissenter, and in like manner should we) So we do in the bowels of Christ Jesus commend the consideration of these things unto our Brethren in the several Churches. What is here offered is far from being any declining from former Principles, it is rather a pursuance thereof; for it is all included in, or deducible from what we unanimously professed and owned in the fore-mentioned Platform of Discipline, many years since. There it is asserted, That Children are Church-members; that they have many Priviledges which others (not Church-members) have not; and that they are under Discipline in the Church, chap. 12. sect. 7. and that will infer the right of their Children, they continuing to walk orderly. And the other matter of Consociation, or exercise of Communion of Churches, is largely held forth, Chap. 15, & 16.

It may be an Objection lying in the minds of some, and which many may desire a fuller Answer unto; that these things, or some of them, are Innovations in our Church-ways, and things which the Lord's Worthies in New-England, who are now with God, did never teach nor hold; and therefore why should we now, after so many years, fall upon new Opinions and Practises? Is not this a declining from our first Purity, and a blameable Alteration? To this: Although it were a sufficient Answer to say, That in Matters of Religion, not so much what hath been held or practised, as what should be, and what the Word of God prescribes, ought to be our Enquiry and our Rule. The People in Nehemiah's time are commended, for doing as they found written in the Law, though



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though from the dayes of Joshua the Son of Nun, unto that day, the children of Israel had not done so, *Nehem. 8. 14, 17. See the like, 2 Chro. 30. 5, 26. 2 Kings 23. 21, 22.* they did not tye themselves to former use and custome, but to the Rule of God's written Word; and so should we. It was Thyatira's praise, that their good Works were more at the last, than at the first, *Rev. 2. 19.* The Lord's humble and faithful Servants are not wont to be forward to think themselves perfect in their attainments; but desirous rather to make a progress in the knowledge and practise of God's holy Will. If therefore the things here propounded concerning the Children of Church-members, and the Consociation of Churches, be a part of the Will of God contained in the Scriptures (as we hope the Discourse ensuing will shew them to be) that doth sufficiently bespeak their entertainment, although they had not formerly been held or heard of amongst us. Yet this must not be granted, the contrary being the Truth, viz. that the Points herein which may be most scrupled by some, are known to have been the Judgement of the generality of the Elders of these Churches for many years, and of those that have been of most eminent esteem among us. As (besides what was before mentioned from the Platform of Discipline) may appear by the following Testimonies, from sundry Eminent and Worthy Ministers of Christ in New-England, who are now with God.

First, Touching the Children of Church-members.

Mr. Cotton hath this Saying; The Covenant and Blessing of Abraham is that which we plead for, which the Apostle saith is come upon us Gentiles, *Gal. 3. 14.* which admitteth the faithful and their Infant-Seed, not during their Lives, in case their lives should grow up to Apostacy or open Scandal, but during their Infancy, and so long after as they shall continue in a visible Profession of the Covenant and Faith, and Religion of their Fathers; otherwise, if the children of the Faithful grow up to Apostacy, or any open Scandal (as Ishmael and Esau did) as they were then, so such like now are to be cast out of the fellowship of the Covenant, and of the Seals thereof. *Grounds and ends of Baptism of Children, p. 106. See also, p. 133, 134.* Again, The seed of the Israelites, though many of them were not sincerely godly, yet whilst they held forth the publick Profession of God's people, *Dent. 26. 3---* 11. and continued under the wing of the Covenant, and subjection to the Ordinances, they were still accounted an holy Seed, *Ezra 9. 2.* and so their children were partakers of Circumcision. Yea further, though themselves were sometimes kept from the Lords Supper (the Passeeover) for some or other uncleanness, yet that debarred not their children from circumcision. Against this may it not seem vain to stand upon a difference between the Church of Israel, and our Churches of the New-Testament — For the same Covenant which God made with the National Church of Israel and their Seed, it is the very same for substance, and none other, which the Lord makes with any Congregational Church, and our Seed. *Query 9<sup>th</sup>. of Accommodation and*

*Communion*



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*Communion of Presbyt. and Congregat. Churches. And the same for Substance with those Queries, was delivered by him in 12. Propositions, as Mr. Tho. Allen witnesseth in Epist. to the Reader before Treat. of Covenant, and those Queries. Now in the 8<sup>th</sup>. of those Propositions he hath these Words; The children of Church-members with us, though Baptized in their Infancy, yet when they come to age, they are not received to the Lords Supper, nor admitted to fellowship of Voting in Admissions, Elections, Censures, till they come to profess their Faith and Repentance, and to lay hold of the Covenant of their Parents before the Church; and yet they being not cast out of the Church, nor from the Covenant thereof, their children as well as themselves being within the Covenant, they may be partakers of the first Seal of the Covenant. Lastly, speaking to that Objection, That the Baptism of Infants overthrowes and destroyes the Body of Christ, the holy Temple of God; and that in time it will come to consist of natural and carnal Members, and the power of Government rest in the hands of the Wicked. He Answers, That this puts a fear where no fear is, or a causeless fear. And in prosecution of his Answer he hath these Words; Let the Primitive Practice be restored to its purity, (viz. that due care be taken of baptized Members of the Church, for their fitting for the Lords Table) and then there will be no more fear of pestering Churches with a carnal Generation of Members, baptized in their infancy, then of admitting a carnal company of hypocrites, confessing their Faith and Repentance in the face of the Congregation. Either the Lord in the faithfulness of his Covenant will sanctifie the hearts of the baptized Infants to prepare them for his Table, or else he will discover their hypocrisie and prophaness in the presence of his Church before men and Angels, and so prevent the pollution of the Lords Table, and corruption of the Discipline of the Church by their partaking in them. Grounds and ends of Baptism, &c. p. 161. 163. See also Holiness of Church-members, p. 41. 51, 56, 57, 63, 87. Bloody Tenent washed, p. 44. 78.*

*Mr. Hooker saith, Suppose a whole Congregation should consist of such who were children to Parents now deceased, who were confederate, their children were true members according to the Rules of the Gospel, by the profession of their Fathers Covenant, though they should not make any personal and vocal expression of their engagement as the fathers did. Survey, part 1. p. 48. Again, We maintain according to truth, that the believing parent, covenants and confesseth for himself and his posterity, and this covenanting then and now is the same for the kind of it. Part. 3. p. 25. See p. 17, 18. & Part 1. p. 69, 76, 77. And in the Preface, setting down sundry things, wherein he consents with Mr. R. he expresseth this for one, that Infants of visible Churches born of wicked Parents, being Members of the Church, ought to be baptized. In these (saith he) and several other particulars, we fully accord with Mr. R. And part. 3. p. 11. It is not*



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not then the Question, whether wicked Members while they are tolerated sinfully in the Church, they and their children may partake of the Priviledges? for this is beyond question, nor do I know, nor yet ever heard it denied by any of ours.

*Mr. Philips, speaking of a People made partakers of God's Covenant, and all the Priviledges outwardly belonging thereto, he saith, They themselves, and all that ever proceed from them, continue in the same state, Parents and Children successively, so long as the Lord continues the course of his Dispensation; nor can any alteration befall them, whereby this estate is dissolved, but some apparent act of God breaking them off from him.*

*Reply, p. 126. Again, speaking of that Holiness, 1 Cor. 7. 14. he saith, I take it of federal holiness, whereby the Children are with the believing Parents taken by God to be his, and by him put under his Covenant, and so they continue when men of years, though they never have any further Grace wrought in them, nor have any other state upon them, than what they had when they were born. Ibid. p. 131. Again, a company become or are a Church, either by conversion and initial constitution, or by continuance of the same constituted Churches successively by propagation of members, who are all born in the Church-state, and under the Covenant of God, and belong unto the Church, and are a Church successively so long as God shall continue his begun dispensation, even as well and as fully as the first. Ibid. p. 145.*

*Mr. Shepherd in Defence of the Nine Positions, p. 143. hath this expression, Concerning the Infants of Church-members, they are subject to Censures whensoever they offend the Church, as others are, though so long as they live innocently they need them not. And in the year 1649, not three months before his Death, he wrote unto a Friend a large Letter (yet extant under his own hand) concerning the Membership of Children, wherein he pro- veth by sundry Arguments, that they are Members, and answereth sundry Objections against it, and sheweth at large what great good there is in Childrens Membership. In which Discourses he asserteth, That as they are Members in their infancy, so they continue Members when they are grown up, till for their wickedness they be cast out; and that they being Members, their seed successively are Members also, until by Dissolution or Excommunication they be unchurched: That though they are Members, it follows not that they must come to the Lord's Supper, but they must first appear able to examine themselves, and discern the Lord's Body: That the children of godly parents, though they do not manifest faith in the Gospel, yet they are to be accounted of God's Church, until they positively reject the Gospel, &c. 11. That this Membership of children hath no tendency in it to pollute the Church, no more than in the Old Testament, but is a means rather of the contrary, and that there is as much danger*  
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(if not more) of the degenerating and apostatizing of Churches gathered of professing Believers, as of those that rise out of the seed of such.

*Mr. Prudden in a Letter to a Friend, written in the year 1651. doth plainly express it to be his Judgment,* That the children of Church-members, are Members, and so have right to have their children baptized, though themselves be not yet admitted to the Lord's Supper. *His words are these:*

“Touching the desire of such Members children, as desire to have their children baptized, it is a thing that I do not yet hear practised in any of our Churches. But for mine own part, I am inclined to think, that it cannot justly be denied, because their next parents (however not admitted to the Lords Supper) stand as compleat Members of the Church, within the Church-Covenant, and so acknowledged that they might have right to Baptism. Now they being in Covenant, and standing Members, their Children also are Members by vertue of their Parents Covenant and Membership, as well as they themselves were by vertue of their Parents Covenant and Membership; And they have not renounced that Covenant, nor are justly censured for breach of that Covenant, but do own it and profess it, and by vertue of it claim the privilege of it to their children. *Then he puts this his Argument into form, thus:* Those Children who are within the Covenant of the Church, and so Members of it, Baptism cannot be denied unto. But the Children in question are within the Covenant of the Church, and so Members of it. Therefore Baptism cannot be denied unto them. The Assumption is proved thus: The Children of such Parents as are within the Covenant of the Church, and so Members of the Church, are themselves within the Covenant of the Church, and so Members of it. But the Children in question are Children of such Parents as are in Covenant, and so Members of the Church. Therefore they are so themselves. The Proposition is clear, because the Parents covenant for themselves, and for their Children, *Deut. 29. 10, — 16. Ezek. 16. 8, 13. And God accepts both, Gen. 17. 12, 13.* The whole Nation is federally holy, *Exra 9. 2.* they are expressly said to be in Covenant with their fathers, *Deut. 29.* nor partly or partially in Covenant, *Rom. 9. 3, 4. Alt. 2. 39.* and God files himself their God as well as their fathers, *Gen. 17. 7, 8, 9.* and to have God to be our God, is to be in compleat Church-covenant with him. The Assumption is evident, because else such their Parents had not right to Baptism the Seal of the Covenant, but that they had right unto, and so received it; and the same right that they had, their children have, who are included in their Covenant, as they were in their fathers—and are not less truly, or less compleatly in Covenant.

*Lastly, (to add no more) Mr. Nath. Rogers, in a Letter to a Friend, bearing*



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ing date 18. 12. 1652. *hath these words:* "To the Question concerning  
 "the Children of Church-members, I have nothing to oppose, and I won-  
 "der any should deny them to be Members. They are Members *in sensu*  
 "*Ecclesiastico*; God so calls them, the Church is so to account of them:  
 "And when they are *adulti aetate*, though having done no personal act,  
 "yet are to be in charity judged Members still, and till after due calling  
 "upon, they shall refuse or neglect to acknowledge and own the Cove-  
 "nant of their Parents, and profess their belief of, and subjection to the  
 "contents thereof— For Practice, I confess I account it our great de-  
 "fault that we have made no more real distinction between these and o-  
 "thers, that they have been no more attended, as the lambs of the Flock  
 "of Christ: and whether it be not the cause of the corruption and woful  
 "defection of our youth, *disquiri permittimus*.

So that it was the Judgment of these *Members* in their time, that the chil-  
 dren of Church-members are members of the Church as well as their parents, and  
 do not cease to be members by becoming adult, but do still continue in the Church,  
 until in some way of God they be cast out; and that they are subject to Church-  
 discipline, even as other members, and may have their children baptized before  
 themselves be received to the Lords Supper: and yet that in this way there is no  
 tendency to the corrupting of the Church by unworthy members, or of the Ordi-  
 nances by unworthy partakers. And in the Synod held at Cambridge in the  
 year 1648. that particular point of Baptizing the Children of such as were  
 admitted Members in minority, but not yet in full communion, was inscribed in  
 some of the draughts that were prepared for that Assembly, and was then deba-  
 ted and confirmed by the like Arguments as we now use, and was generally con-  
 sented to; though because some few dissented, and there was not the like urgency  
 of occasion for present practice, it was not then put into the Platform that was  
 after printed. We need not mention the Meeting of Elders at Boston upon the  
 Call of the hon. Court in the year 1657. where, in Answer to XXI. Questions,  
 since printed, this Point is particularly asserted. By all which it appeareth, that  
 these are not things lately devised, or before unheard-of, nor can they justly be  
 censured as Innovations or Declensions from the received Doctrine in New-  
 England. It is true, that in the beginning of these Plantations, and the In-  
 fancy of these Churches, there was not so much said touching these things, as  
 there hath been since; and the reason is, Because then there was not the like oc-  
 casion as since hath been: Few Children of Church-members being then adult,  
 at least few that were then married, and had children. Accordingly, when a  
 Question was put about the privilege of Members Children, when come to years,  
 these Churches then having been but of few years standing; our Answer was,  
 That by reason of the Infancy of these Churches, we had then had no occasion to  
 determine what to judge or practise in that matter. Answer to the 5th and  
 6th of the 32 Questions: which may satisfy as the Reason why in our first be-  
 ginnings there was no more said touching these Questions. But afterwards,



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when there was more cause for it; many of the Elders in these Churches, both such as are now living, and sundry who are now deceased, did declare their Judgments as aforesaid, and this many years ago.

Secondly, Touching Consociation of Churches, take these few Testimonies, instead of many more that might be alledged.

Mr. Cotton, Keys, p. 54, 55. It is a safe and wholesome, and holy Ordinance of Christ, for particular Churches to joyn together in holy Covenant, or Communion and Consociation among themselves, to administer all their Church affairs (which are of weighty, and difficult and common concernment) not without common consultation and consent of other Churches about them. And how it is so, he there sheweth in all the particulars. See also, p. 24, 29, 47, 59.

Mr. Hooker, Survey, see part 4. p. 2. & p. 45. And in the Preface he professeth his consent with Mr. R. That Consociation of Churches is not only lawful, but in some cases necessary. That when causes are difficult, and particular Churches want light and help, they should crave the assistance of such a Consociation. That Churches so meeting, have right to Counsel, Rebuke, &c. as the case doth require. And in case any particular Church shall walk pertinaciously, either in the profession of Error, or sinful Practice, and will not hear their counsel, they may and should renounce the right-hand of fellowship with them. And after he sett down this of Consociation of Churches amongst other things, wherein he had leave to profess the joynt Judgment of all the Elders upon the River; of New-haven, Gunford, Milford, Stratford, Fairfield, and most of the Elders in the Bay. By which it is clear, that this point of Consociation of Churches is no new invention of these times, but was taught and professed in New-England many years ago; for so it was we see in Mr. Hooker's time, and it is now above fifteen years since he departed this life.

To these of our own Ministers, we shall only adde a passage in the Apologetical Narration of Dr. Goodwyn, Mr. Nye, Mr. Siderth Simpson, Mr. Burroughs, and Mr. Bridge; wherein, besides much more to this purpose, touching the Remedy provided in the Congregational way for mal-administrations, or other miscarriages in Churches, p. 16-21. They set it down (in p. 21) as their past and present Profession, That it is the most to be abhorred Maxime that any Religion hath ever made profession of, and therefore of all other the most contradictory and dishonourable unto that of Christianity, that a single and particular Society of men, professing the Name of Christ, and pretending to be endowed with a Power from Christ, to judge them that are of the same Body and Society within themselves, should further arrogate unto themselves an exemption from giving account, or being censurable by any other, either Christian Magistrate above them, or Neighbour-Churches about them. See also M. Burroughs, Heart-Divis. p. 43, 47.

Brethren, bear with us: Were it for our own sakes, or names, or interests, we should



## to the Christian Reader.

Should not be solicitous to beg charity of you. With us it is a small thing to be judged of mans day: But it is for your sakes, for your childrens sake, and for the Lord's sake, that we intreat for a charitable, candid, and considerate Acceptation of our labour herein. It is, that the Congregations of the Lord might be established before Him in Truth and Peace, and that they might have one heart and one way in the fear of God, for the good of them and of their children after them. Do we herein seek our selves? our own advantage, ease or glory? Surely we feel the contrary! What is it we desire, but that we might do our utmost to carry your poor children to Heaven; and that we might see these Churches bound up together in the Bonds of Truth and Peace? Forgive us this wrong. But should the Church-education of your children be, by the want of your hearty concurrence, rendered either unfeizible or ineffectual; should they live as Lambs in a large place, for want of your agreement to own them of the Flock, we beseech you to consider how uncomfortable the account hereof would be another day. We pray with the Apostle, that you do no evil, not that we should appear approved, but that you should do that which is good and right, though we be rejected. For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth: and this also we wish, even your perfection, 2 Cor. 13. 7, 8, 9. However, we hope after-ages will bear witness, that we have bin in some measure faithful to the Truth in these things, and to this part of Christs Kingdom also in our generation.

But we may not let pass this opportunity, without a word of Caution and Exhortation to the Youth of the Country, the children of our Churches, whose Interest we have here asserted. Be not you puffed up with Priviledges, but humbled rather, in the awful sense of the Engagement, Duty and Danger that doth attend them. It is an high favour to have a place in Bethel, in the house of God, and in the gate of Heaven; but it is a dreadful place: God will be sanctified in all that come nigh him. A place nigh unto God (or among his People, who are near to him, Ps. 184. 14.) is a place of great fear, Psa. 89. 7. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, when owned as the People of the Lord your God; (Deut. 27. 9, 10.) lest there should be among you any root that beareth gall and wormwood. Take heed that you do not with a spirit of pride and haughtiness, or of vanity and lightness, either challenge or use any of your Priviledges. Think not to bear the Name of Christians without bearing the Yoke of Christ. Remember, that all Relations to God and to his People, do come laden with Duty; and all Gospel-duty must be done in humility. The wayes of the Lord are right, and the humble and serious shall walk in them, but proud Transgressors shall fall therein. Be not sons of Belial, that can bear no yoke: Learn subjection to Christs holy Government in all the parts and wayes thereof. Be subject to your godly Parents: Be subject to your spiritual Fathers and Pastors, and to all their Instructions, Admonitions and Exhortations: Be subject unto faithful Brethren, and to words of counsel and help from them: Ye younger, submit your selves unto the elder; and to that end, be clothed with humility. Lye under the Word and Will of Christ, as dispensed and conveyed to you by all his appointed Instruments in their  
respective



## The PREFACE, &c.

respect've places. Break not in upon the Lord's Table (or upon the Priviledges of full Communion) without due qualification, and orderly admission thereunto, lest you eat and drink your own damnation. Be ordered, and take not upon you to order the affairs of God's Family; that is not the place of those who are yet but in the state of Initiation and Education in the Church of God. Carry it in all things with a spirit of humility, modesty, sobriety and fear, that our souls may not weep in secret for your pride, and that God may not reject and reject you as a generation of his wrath. Oh that the Lord would pour out a spirit of Humiliation and Repentance upon all the younger sort in the Country, (yea and upon elder too, for our neglects) from Dan to Beersheba! Oh that we might meet at Bochim, because so many Canaanites of unsubdued, yea growing corruptions, are found among us! Let it not be said, that when the first and best generation in New-England were gathered to their fathers, there arose another generation after them that knew not the Lord. Behold, the Lord had a delight in your fathers to love them, and he hath chosen you their seed after them, to enjoy these Liberties and Opportunities, as it is this day: Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your hearts, and be no more stiff-necked, but yeeld your selves to the Lord, and to the Order of his Sanctuary, to seek him, and wait on him in all his wayes with holy fear and trembling: for the Lord your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away his face from you, if you return to him; if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if you forsake him, he will cast you off for ever.

We shall conclude, when we have given the Reader a short account of the Work ensuing. The Propositions in Answer to the first Question, were (after much discussion and consideration from the Word of God) Voted and Concluded by the Assembly in the particular terms as they are here expressed. The Arguments then used for their confirmation, being drawn up by some deputed thereunto, after they had been severall times read and considered in the Assembly, were Voted and Consented to, as to the sum and substance thereof. The Answer to the second Question is here given with great brevity; partly, because so much is already said thereabout in the aforesaid Platform of Discipline, and partly by reason of great straits of time: But what is here presented, was the joynt conclusion of the Synod. A Preface was desired by the Assembly, to be prefixed by some appointed thereunto, which is here accordingly by them performed.

Now the God of Truth and Peace guide us, and all his People in the wayes, and give us the fruit thereof; help us to feed his flock and his lambs, and to be fed by him as the sheep of his pasture, that when the chief-Shepherd shall appear, we may receive together a Crown of glory that fadeth not away, and may enter into the Joy of our Lord, as those that have neither despised his little ones, nor denied to be our Brothers keeper: but having faithfully endeavoured to promote the continuation of his Kingdom, and Communion of his People, may rest and reign with all Saints in the Kingdom of his Glory. Unto whom be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages world without end.



THE  
**A N S W E R**  
 OF THE  
**E L D E R S** and other **M E S S E N G E R S**  
 Of the Churches, Assembled at *Boston* in the Year, 1662.  
 To the **Q U E S T I O N S** Propounded to them by Order  
 of the Honoured *General Court*.

Quest. 1. **W H O** are the Subjects of Baptism?

Answ.

**V V**

The Answer may be given in the following Propositions, briefly confirmed from the Scriptures.

1. They that according to Scripture, are Members of the Visible Church, are the subjects of Baptism.

2. The Members of the Visible Church according to Scripture, are Confederate visible Believers, in particular Churches, and their Infant seed, i. e. Children in minority, whose next Parents, one or both, are in Covenant.

3. The Infant-seed of confederate visible Believers, are members of the same Church with their parents, and when grown up, are personally under the watch, discipline and government of that Church.

4. These Adult persons, are not therefore to be admitted to full Communion, merely because they are and continue members, without such further qualifications, as the Word of God requireth thereunto.

5. Church-members who were admitted in minority, understanding the Doctrine of Faith, and publicly professing their assent thereto; not scandalous in life, and solemnly owning the Covenant before the Church, wherein they give up themselves and their Children to the Lord, and subject themselves to the Government of Christ in the Church, their children are to be Baptized.

6. Such Church-members, who either by death, or some other extraordinary Providence, have been inevitably hindered from publick acting as aforesaid, yet have given the Church cause in judgment of charity, to look at them as so qualified, and such, as had they been called thereunto, would have so acted; their children are to be Baptized.

7. The members of Orthodox Churches, being sound in the Faith, and not scandalous in life, and presenting due testimony thereof; these occasionally coming



ing from one Church to another, may have their Children Baptized in the Church whither they come, by virtue of communion of Churches: but if they remove their habitation, they ought orderly to covenant and subject themselves to the Government of Christ in the Church where they settle their abode, and so their children to be Baptized. It being the Churches duty to receive such unto communion, so far as they are regularly fit for the same.

The Confirmation of these Propositions from the Scripture followeth.

*Proposition First.*

*They that according to Scripture are Members of the visible Church, are the Subjects of Baptism.*

The truth hereof may appear by the following evidences from the Word of God.

1. When Christ saith, *Go ye therefore and teach, or (as the Greek is) disciple all Nations, Baptizing them*, Mat. 28. 19. he expresseth the adequate subject of Baptism, to be *disciples, or disciplined ones*. But *disciples* there, is the same with *members of the visible Church*.

For the visible Church is Christs School, wherein all the members stand related and subjected to him, as their Master and Teacher, and so are his *scholars or disciples*, and under his teaching, as *vers. 20*. And it is that visible spiritual Kingdom of Christ, which he there, from his Kingly power, *vers. 18*. sendeth them to set up and administer in *vers. 19*. the subjects whereof are under his Laws and Government, *ver. 20*. Which subjects (or members of that Kingdom, *i. e.* of the visible Church) are termed *disciples, ver. 19*. Also in the *Acts* of the Apostles (the story of their accomplishment of that Commission) *disciples* are usually put for *members of the visible Church*, *Acts 1. 15*. In the midst of the *disciples*, who, with others added to them, are called *the Church*, *Acts 2. 47*. The members whereof are again called *disciples*, *Acts 6. 1, 2. Acts 9. 1, -- against the disciples of the Lord, i. e. against the Church of God. 1 Cor. 15. 9. Gal. 1. 13. Acts 9. 26. He assayed to joyn himself to the disciples. The disciples at Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, Acts 14. 21, 22. are called the church in each of these places, ver. 23. So the Church, ver. 27, the disciples, ver. 28. Acts 18. 22. the Church at Cesaria; Act. 21. 16. the disciples of Cesaria. So Acts 18. 23. with chap. 15. 41. and Gal. 1. 2. Acts 18. 27. and chap. 20. 1. with vers. 17. 28. From all which it appeareth, that *disciples* in Mat. 28. 19. and *members of the visible Church*, are terms equivalent: and *disciples* being there by Christ himself made the subjects of Baptism, it follows that the members of the visible Church are the subjects of Baptism.*

2. Baptism is the seal of first entrance or admission into the visible Church, as appeareth from those Texts, *1 Cor. 12. 13. Baptised into one body, i. e. our entrance into the body or Church of Christ is sealed by Baptism; and Rom.*



*Rom. 6. 3, 5. Gal. 3. 27.* where it is shewed, that Baptism is the Sacrament of *union* or of ingrafting into Christ the head, and consequently into the Church his body; and from the Apostles constant practise in baptizing persons upon their first coming in, or first giving up themselves to the Lord and them. *Acts 8. 12. & 16. 15, 33. & 18. 8.* and in *Acts 2. 41, 42.* they were Baptized at their first adding to the Church, or admission into the Apostles fellowship, wherein they afterward continued. And from its answering unto circumcision, which was a seal of initiation or admission into the Church; Hence it belongs to all and only those that are entered into, that are within, or that are members of the visible Church.

3. *They that according to Scripture are members of the visible Church, they are in Covenant;* for it is the Covenant that constitutes the Church, *Deut. 29. 12, 13.* They must enter into Covenant, that they might be established the People of Church of God. Now the initiatory seal is affixed to the Covenant, & appointed to run parallel therewith, *Gen. 17. 7, 9, 10, 11.* to Circumcision was: and hence called the Covenant, *Gen. 17. 13. Acts 7. 8.* and so Baptism is, being in like manner annexed to the Promise or Covenant, *Act. 2. 38, 39.* and being the seal that answereth to Circumcision, *Col. 2. 11, 12.*

4. *Christ both sanctify and cleanse the Church by the washing of water, i. e. by Baptism, Ephes. 5. 25, 26.* Therefore the whole Church, and so all the members thereof (who are also said in Scripture to be *Sanctified in Christ Jesus, 1 Cor. 1. 2.*) are the subjects of Baptism. And although it is the invisible church, unto the spiritual and eternal good whereof, this and all other Ordinances lastly have respect, and which the place mentioned in *Ephes. 5.* may in a special manner look unto, yet it is the visible Church that is the next and immediate subject of the administration thereof. For the subject of visible external Ordinances to be administered by men, must needs be visible. And so the Apostles Baptized sundry persons, who were of the visible, but not of the invisible Church, as *Simon Magus, Ananias and Sapphira, & others.* And these are visibly purchased & sanctified by the blood of Christ, the blood of the Covenant, *Acts 20. 28. Heb. 10. 29.* Therefore the visible seal of the covenant, & of cleansing by Christs blood belongs to them.

5. *The Circumcision is often put for the whole Jewish Church, or for the members of the visible church under the Old Testament.*

Those within are expressed by [the circumcised] and those without by [the uncircumcised] *Rom. 15. 8, & 3. 30. Ephes. 2. 11; Judg. 14. 3, and 15. 18. 1 Sam. 14. 6. & 17. 26, 36. Jer. 9. 25. 26.* Hence by proportion Baptism (which is our Gospel circumcision, *Col. 2. 11, 12.*) belongs to the whole visible Church under the New Testament. Actual and personal circumcision was indeed proper to the males of old, females being but inclusively and virtually circumcised, and so counted of the Circumcision: but the Lord hath taken away that difference now, and appointed Baptism



*Propositions concerning the Subject of Baptism,*

to be personally applied to both sexes, - *Acts* 8. 12. & 16. 15. *Gal.* 3. 28. So that every particular member of the visible church is now a subject of Baptism. We conclude therefore that Baptism pertains to the whole visible church, and to all and every one therein, and to no other.

*Proposition second.*

*The members of the visible church according to Scripture, are confederate visible believers, in particular churches, and their infant-seed, i. e. children in minority, whose next parents, one or both are in covenant.*

Sundry particulars are comprised in this proposition, which we may consider and confirm distinctly.

*Part. 1. Adult persons who are members of the visible church, are by rule confederate visible believers.* *Acts* 5. 14. *Believers were added to the Lord.* The believing *Corinthians* were members of the church there, *Acts* 18. 8. with *1 Cor.* 1. 2. & 12. 27. The Inscriptions of the Epistles written to churches, and calling the members thereof *Saints* and *faithful*, shew the same thing. *Ephes.* 1. 1. *Phil.* 1. 1. *Col.* 1. 2. And that confederation, i. e. covenanting explicite or implicite, (the latter preserveth the essence of confederation, the former is duty and most desirable.) is necessary to make one a member of the visible church, appears. 1. Because the church is constituted by Covenant: for there is between Christ and the church the mutual engagement and relation of King and Subjects, Husband and Spouse; this cannot be but by covenant (internal, if you speak of the invisible church, external of the visible) a church is a company that can say, God is our God and we are his People, this is from the covenant between God and them. *Deut.* 29. 12, 13. *Ezek.* 16. 8. 2. The church of the Old Testament was the church of God by covenant, *Gen.* 17. *Deut.* 29. and was reformed still by renewing of the covenant, *2 Chron.* 15. 12. & 23. 16. & 34. 31, 32. *Neh.* 9. 38. Now the churches of the Gentiles under the New Testament, stand upon the same basis or root with the church of the Old Testament, & therefore are constituted by covenant as that was, *Rom.* 11. 17, 18. *Ephes.* 2. 11, 12, 19. & 3. 6. *Heb.* 8. 10. 3. Baptism enters us into the church Sacramentally, i. e. by sealing the covenant. The covenant therefore is that which constitutes the church and infers membership, and is the *Vow* in Baptism commonly spoken of.

*Partic. 2. The members of the visible church, are such as are confederate in particular churches.* It may be minded that we are here speaking of Members so stated in the visible church, as that they are Subjects to whom church ordinances may regularly be administered, and that according to ordinary dispensation. For were it granted that the *Apostles* and *Evangelists* did sometimes Baptize such as were not members of any particular church, yet their extraordinary office, large Power and commission, renders them not imitable therein by ordinary Officers. For then they might Baptize in private



## and Consociation of Churches.

private without the presence of a Christian assembly, as Philip did the Eunu-  
 ch. But that in ordinary dispensation, the Members of the visible  
 Church according to Scripture, are such as are Members of some particu-  
 lar Church, appears, 1. Because the visible believer that professedly  
 Covenants with God, doth therein give up himself to wait on God in all  
 his Ordinances, *Dent. 26. 17, 18. Mat. 28. 19, 20.* But all the Ordinances  
 of God are to be enjoyed only in a particular Church. (For how often do  
 we find in the Scripture that they came together into one place (or into a  
 congregational particular Church) for the observation and enjoyment of  
 the Ordinances. *Acts 2. 1. 44, 46. & 4. 31. & 11. 26. & 20. 7. 1 Cor. 5. 4.  
 & 11. 18, 20, 33. & 14. 23.* 2. The Apostle in his Epistles writing to  
 Saints or Believers, writes to them as in particular Churches, *1 Cor. 1. 2.  
 Eph. 1. 1. Phil. 1. 1. Col. 1. 2.* And when the story of the Acts speaks of  
 Disciples, other places shew that those are understood to be Members of  
 particular Churches, *Acts 18. 23. with Gal. 1. 2. Acts 21. 16. with chap. 18.  
 23. Acts 11. 26. & 14. 22, 23, 27, 28.* All which shews that the Scripture  
 acknowledgeth no settled orderly estate of visible believers in Covenant  
 with God, but only in particular Churches. 3. The Members of the  
 visible church are Disciples, as was above cleared; now Disciples are un-  
 der Discipline, and liable to church censures, for they are stated subjects  
 of Christs Laws and Government, *Mat. 23. 19, 20.* but Church Govern-  
 ment and Censures are extant now in ordinary dispensation, only in a par-  
 ticular church, *Mat. 18. 17. 1 Cor. 5. 4.*

Partic. 3. *The Infant-Seed of confederate visible Believers, are also Mem-  
 bers of the visible Church.* The truth of this is evident from the Scripture  
 and reasons following.

Arg. 1. *The Covenant of Abraham as to the substance thereof, viz. that where-  
 by God declares himself to be the God of the Faithful and their Seed, Gen. 17.  
 7. continues under the Gospel, as appears. 1. Because the Believing in-  
 ched Gentiles under the New-Testament, do stand upon the same root of A-  
 brams Covenant, which the Jews were broken off from, Rom. 11. 16, 17,  
 18. 2. Because Abraham in regard of that Covenant was made a Father  
 of many Nations, Gen. 17. 4, 5. even of Gentiles as well as Jews, under  
 New-Testament as well as Old, Rom. 4. 16, 17. Gal. 3. 29. i. e. in Abraham  
 as a pattern and root, God (not only shewed how he justifies the belie-  
 ver, Gal. 3. 6, 9. Rom. 4. but also) conveyed that covenant to the faithful  
 and their Seed in all nations, Luk. 19. 9. If a Son of Abraham, then Salvation, i. e. the co-  
 venant-dispensation of Salvation is come to his house. 3. As that covenant was commu-  
 nicated to proselyte Gentiles under the Old Testament, so its communication to the in-  
 ched Gentiles under the New-Testament, is clearly held forth in divers places, Gal. 3. 14.  
 the blessing of Abraham comprized both the internal benefits of Justification by faith, &c.  
 which the Apostle is there treating of; and the external dispensation of Grace in the vi-  
 sible church to the faithful and their seed, Gen. 28. 4. but the whole blessing of Abraham,  
 (and so the whole covenant) is come upon the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, Eph. 2. 12,  
 19, They*



## Propositions concerning the Subject of Baptism,

They have been strangers, but now were no more strangers from the covenants of promise, *i. e.* from the covenant of Grace, which had been often renewed, especially with Abraham and the house of Israel, and had been in the external dispensation of it, their peculiar portion, so that the Ephesians, who were a far off, being now called and made nigh, *ver.* 13--17. they have the promise, or the covenant of promise to them, and to their Children, according to *Gal.* 2. 39. and so are partakers of that Covenant of Abraham, that we are speaking of. *Eph.* 3. 6. The inchurched Gentiles are put into the same inheritance for substance (both as to invisible and visible benefits according to their respective conditions) are of the same body, and partakers of the same promise, with the Jews, the Children of Abraham of old. The same may be gathered from *Gen.* 9. 27. *Mat.* 8. 11, & 21. 43. 4. Sundry Scriptures which extend to Gospel-times, do confirm the same interest to the seed of the faithful, which is held forth in the Covenant of Abraham, and consequently do confirm the continuance of that covenant, as *Exod.* 20. 6. there is the sanction of a moral and perpetual Commandement, and that respecting Ordinances, the portion of the Church, God declareth himself to be a God of mercy, to them that love him, and to their seed after them in their generations: consonant to *Gen.* 17. 7. compare here with *Isa.* 105. 8, 9. & *Deut.* 7. 9. *Deut.* 30. 6. The grace signified by Circumcision is there promised to Parents and Children, importing the Covenant to both; which Circumcision sealed, *Gen.* 17. and that is a Gospel promise, as the Apostle tying part of that context, as the voice of the Gospel shews, *Rom.* 10. 6, 8; with *Deut.* 30. 10--14. and it reacheth to the Jews in the latter dayes, *Isa.* 65. 23. In the most glorious Gospel-state of the Church, *ver.* 17--19. the blessing of the Lord is the promised portion of the off-spring or Children, as well as of the faithful parents, so *Isa.* 44. 3, 4. *Isa.* 59. 20, 21, *Ezek.* 37. 25, 26. at the future calling of the Jewes, which those texts have reference to (*Rom.* 11. 26. *Ezek.* 37. 19--22, 23, 24.) their children shall be under the promise or Covenant of special Grace to be conveyed to them in the Ordinances, *Isa.* 59. 21. and be subjects of David, *i. e.* Christ their King, *Ezek.* 37. 25. and have a portion in his Sanctuary, *ver.* 26. and this according to the tenor of the ancient covenant of Abraham, whereby God will be their God (unto both of parents and Children) and they shall be his People, *ver.* 26, 27. Now although more abundant fruits of the Covenant may be seen in those times, and the Jewes then may have more abundant Grace given to the body of them, to continue in the Covenant; yet the tenor and frame of the Covenant it self, is one and the same, both to Jewes, and Gentiles under the New Testament, *Gal.* 3. 28. *Col.* 3. 11. *Heb.* 8. 10. The *House of Israel* is the Church of God both among Jewes and Gentiles under the New Testament, have that Covenant made with them; The sum whereof is, I will be their God, and they shall be my people; which is a renewing of that Covenant of Abraham, in *Gen.* 17. (as the same is very often over in those terms renewed in Scripture, and is distinguished from the Law, *Gal.* 3. 16, 17. *Heb.* 8. 9.) wherein is implied God's being a God to the seed as well as parents, and taking both to be his People, though it be not expressed; even as it is often plainly implied in that expression of the Covenant in other places of Scripture, *Deut.* 29. 13. *Jer.* 31. 1, & 32. 38, 39, & 34. 7, & 30. 22, 23. *Ezek.* 37. 27, 28. Also the writing of the Law in the heart, in *Heb.* 8. 10. is that heart-circumcision which *Deut.* 30. 6. extends both to Parents and Seed. And the term, *House of Israel*, doth according to Scripture use fitly express, and take in (especially as to the external administration of the Covenant) both Parents and Children, among both which are found that elect and saved number, that make up the invisible Israel, compare *Jer.* 13. 11, & 9. 26. *Isa.* 53. 7. *Hos.* 1. 8. *Ezek.* 39. 25. Neither may we exclude the least in age from the good of that promise, *Heb.* 8. 11. (they being sometimes pointed to by that phrase, from the least to the greatest, *Jer.* 44. 12. with *verse.* 7.) to more than the least in other respects; compare *Isa.* 54. 13.



In *Act. 2. 39.* at the passing of those Jewes into New Testament Church-estate, the Lord is so far from *repealing the Covenant-interest* that was granted unto *children* in the former Testament, or from making the children there losers by their Parents faith, that he doth explesly *renew* the old grant, and tells them that *the promise or covenant* (for the promise and the covenant are terms that do mutually infer each other; compare *Act. 3. 25. Gal. 3. 16, 17, 18, 29. Rom. 4. 16. Heb. 6. 17.*) *is to them, and to their children*; and the same is asserted to be the appointed portion of *the far off Gentiles*, when they should be called. By all which it appeareth, that the *covenant of Abraham, Gen. 17. 7. whereby God is the God of the Faithful and their Seed, continues under the Gospel.*

Now if the Seed of the Faithful be still in the Covenant of Abraham, then they are members of the visible Church. 1. Because that covenant of Abraham, *Gen. 17. 7.* was properly Church-covenant, or the Covenant which God makes with his visible Church, i. e. the covenant of grace considered in the external dispensation of it, and in the promises and privileges that belong to that dispensation: For many were taken into that covenant, that were never of the invisible church; and by that covenant, the family of Abraham, as also by the renewing thereof, the house of Israel afterward were established the visible church of God, *Gen. 17. and Deut. 29. 12, 13.* and from that covenant men might be broken off, *Gen. 17. 14. Rom. 11. 17, 19.* and to that covenant, Circumcision, the badge of church-membership was annexed. Therefore the covenanters therein were and are church-members. 2. Because in that covenant, the seed are spoken of in terms describing or inferring church-membership, as well as their parents; for they *have God for their God,* and are his people, as well as the parents, *Gen. 17. 7, 8. with Deut. 29. 11, 13.* They have the covenant made with them, *Deut. 29. 14, 15.* and the covenant is said to be *between God and them* (*between me and thee, and between thy Seed after thee*: So the Hebrew runs) *Gen. 17. 7.* They are also in that covenant appointed to be the subjects of the *initiatorial seal* of the covenant, the seal of membership, *Gen. 17. 9, 10, 11.* Therefore the seed are according to that covenant, members of the visible church, as well as their parents.

Arg. 2. Such seed or children are *federally holy*, *1 Cor. 7. 14.* The word [*holy*] as applied to any sort of persons, is never in Scripture used in a lower sense, than for *federal or covenant-holiness* (the covenant-holiness of the visible church;) but very often in that sense, *Ezra 9. 8. Deut. 7. 6. Ex. 14. 2, 21. Ex. 26. 19. Ex. 28. 9. Ezech. 19. 6. Dan. 8. 24. Ex. 12. 7. Rom. 11. 16.* So that to say they are *holy* in this sense, viz. by covenant-relation, and separation to God in his church, is as much as to say, *They are in the Covenant of the visible church, or members of it.*

Arg. 3. From *Mark. 10. 14, 15, 16. Mat. 19. 14.* childrens membership in the visible church, is either the next and immediate sense of those words of Christ, *Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven*; and so the Kingdom of heaven, or of Gods, is not rarely used in other Scriptures to express the visible church, or church-estate, *Mat. 25. 31. Ex. 21. 23. Ex. 8. 11, 12.* or it evidently follows from any other sense that can rationally be given of the words. For those may not be denied a place and portion in the visible church, whom Christ affirms to have a portion in the Kingdom, either of *invisible grace*, or of *eternal glory*. Nor do any in ordinary course pass into the Kingdom of Glory hereafter, but through the Kingdom of Grace in the visible church here. Add also, that Christ there graciously invites and calls little Children to him, is greatly displeased with those that would hinder them, asserts them, notwithstanding their infancy, to be exemplary in receiving the Kingdom of God, embraceth them in his arms, and blesseth them; all which shewes Christ's dear affection to, and owning of the children of the church, as a part of his Kingdom; whom we therefore may not disown, lest we incur his displeasure, as the Disciples did.

Argum. 4. Such seed or children are disciples according to *Mat. 28. 19.* as appears, 1. Because subjects of Christ's Kingdom are equivalent with disciples there, as the frame of that Text shews, *vers. 18, 19, 20.* but such children are subjects of Christ's Kingdom,



or of the kingdom of heaven, Mat. 19. 14. In the disciplin of all Nations intended in Mat. 28. 19. the kingdom of God, which had been the portion of the Jews, was communicated to the Gentiles, according to Mat. 21. 43. But in the kingdom of God these children have an interest or portion, Mark 10. 14. 2. The Apostles in accomplishing that commission, Mat. 28. 19. did disciple some children, viz. the children of disciplined parents, Acts 2. 39. & 16. 10. They are there called and accounted disciples, whom the false Teachers would have brought under the yoke of Circumcision after the manner of Moses, ver. 1. 5. But many of those were children; Exod. 12. 48. Acts 21. 21. Lydia and her household; the Jaylor and all his, were disciplined and baptized, Acts 16. 15, 33. Paul at Corinth took in the children into the holy school of Christ, 1 Cor. 7. 14. 3. Such children belong to Christ, for he calls them to him as his, to receive his blessing, Mark 10. 13. 16. They are to be received in his name, Mark 9. 37. Luke 9. 48. They have a part in the Lord, John 22. 24. 25. Therefore they are disciples; for to belong to Christ, is to be a disciple of Christ, Mark 9. 41. with Mat. 10. 42. Now if they be disciples, then they are members of the visible church, as from the equivalency of those terms was before shewed.

Argum. 5. The whole current and harmony of Scripture shews, that ever since there was a visible church on earth, the children thereof have by the Lords appointment been a part of it. So it was in the Old, and it is and shall be so in the New Testament. Ever the mother of all living, hath a promise made, Gen. 3. 15. not only of Christ the head seed, but through him also of a church seed, to proceed from her in a continual lineal succession, which should continually be at visible unity with, and stand at a distance, or be separated from the seed of the Serpent. Under that promise made to Eve and her seed, the children of Adam are born, and are a part of the church in Adams family: Even Cain was so, Gen. 4. 1. 3. till cast out of the presence of God therein, ver. 14. being now manifestly one of the seed of the Serpent, 1 John 3. 12. and so becoming the father of a wicked unchurched race. But then God appointed unto Eve another, viz. Seth, in whom to continue the line of her church seed, Gen. 4. 25. How it did continue in his seed in their generation, Gen. 5. sheweth. Hence the children of the Church are called Sons of God (which is as much as members of the visible Church) in contradiction to the daughters of men, Gen. 6. 2. If righteous Noah be taken into the Ark (then the only preserving place of the Church) his children are taken in with him, Gen. 7. 1. though one of them, viz. Ham, after proved degenerate and wicked; but till he so appears, he is continued in the Church with his Brethren; So Gen. 9. 25, 26, 27. as the race of Ham, or his son Canaan, (parents and children) are cursed; So Shem (parent and children) is blessed, and continued in the place of blessing, the church. As Joseph also, or Josephs posterity (still parent and children) shall in time be brought in. The holy line mentioned in Gen. 11. 10—26. shews how the church continued in the seed of Shem, from him unto Abraham. When that race grew degenerate, Josh. 24. 2. then God called Abraham out of his Country, and from his kindred, and established his covenant with him, which still took in parents and children, Gen. 17. 7. 9. So it did after in the house of Israel, Deut. 29. 11, 12, 13. and when any eminent restoration or establishment is promised to the church, the children thereof are still taken in, as sharers in the same, Psal. 102. 18, 20. & 69. 35, 39. Jerem. 32. 38, 39. & 46. 18, 19, 23. Now when Christ comes to set up the Gospel administration of his Church in the New Testament, under the term of the Kingdom of heaven, Mat. 3. 2. & 11. 12. he is so far from taking away childrens portion and membership therein, that himself asserts it, Mat. 19. 14. The children of the Gentile, but now believing Corinthians, are holy, 1 Cor. 7. 14. The Apostle writing to the Churches of Ephesus and Colosse, speaks to children, as a part thereof, Eph. 6. 1. Col. 3. 20. The in-churched Romans, and other Gentiles, stand on the root of covenanting Abraham, and in the olive or visible Church, they and their Children, till broken off (as the Jews were) by positive unbelief,



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lies, or rejection of Christ, his Truth or Government, Rom. 11. 13, 16, 17—22. The Children of the Jews, when they shall be called, shall be as aforetime in Church-estate, Jer. 39. 20. with 31. 1. Ezek. 37. 25—28. From all which it appears, that the series, or whole frame and current of Scripture-expressions, doth hold forth the continuance of children's membership in the visible church, from the beginning to the end of the world.

**Part II. 4. The Seed or Children who become Members together with their Parents,** (i. e. by means of their Parents covenanting) are children in minority. This appears, 1. Because such children are holy by their parents covenanting, who would else be unclean, 1 Cor. 7. 14, but they would not necessarily be unclean, if they were adult; for then they might opt for themselves and so be holy by their personal covenanting: Neither on the other hand would they necessarily be holy, if adult (as he asserts the children there to be) for they might continue Pagans. Therefore the Apostle intends only infants or children in minority. 2. It is a principle that carries evidence of light and reason with it, as to all transactions, Civil and Ecclesiastical, that if a man be of age he should answer for himself, John 9. 24. They that are come to years of discretion, so as to have knowledge and understanding, fit to act in a matter of that nature, or to covenant by their own personal act, Neh. 10. 29, 30. Job. 44. 5. 3. They that are regularly taken in with their Parents, are reputed to be visible maintainers of the covenant, and avouchers of God to be their God, Deut. 26. 7, 8. with Deut. 29. 11, 12. But if adult children should, without regard to their own personal act, be taken in with their parents, then some might be reputed entertainers, that are manifest rejecters of the covenant; for so an adult son or daughter of a Godly parent may be.

**Part III. 5. It is requisite to the membership of Children, that the next parents, one or both, be in covenant.** For although after generations have no small benefit by their piety, and keep their standing in the Covenant, and be not Apostates from it; yet the piety of Ancestors sufficeth not, unless the next parent continue in covenant, Rom. 11. 22. 1. Because if the next Parent be cut or broken off, the following Seed are broken off also, Exod. 20. 5. Rom. 11. 17, 18, 26. as the Gentile believing parents and children were taken in; so the Jews, parents and children, were then broken off. 2. One of the parents must be a believer, or else the Children are unclean, 1 Cor. 7. 14. 3. If children may be accounted members and baptized, though the next parents be not in covenant, then the Church should be bound to baptize those whom she can have no power over, nor hope concerning, to see them brought up in the true Christian Religion, and under the Ordinances: For the next Parents being wicked, and not in covenant, may carry away, and bring up their Children to serve other Gods. 4. If we stop not at the next Parents, but grant that Ancestors may, notwithstanding the apostasy of the next Parents, convey membership unto children, then we should want a ground where to stop, and then all the Children on earth should have right to Membership and Baptism.

### Proposition third.

**The Infant-Seed of confederate visible Believers, are members of the same Church with their Parents, and when grown up, are personally under the watch, Discipline and Government of that Church.**

1. That they are members of the same Church with their parents appears; 1. Because so were Isaac and Ishmael of Abrahams Family-church, and the Children of the Jews and Proselytes of Israels National Church; and there is the same reason for children now to be of the same Congregational Church with their Parents. Christ's care for Children, and the scope of the Covenant, as to obligation unto Order and Government, is as great now, as then. 2. Either they are Members of the same Church with their Parents, or of some other church, or Non-members; but neither of the latter; therefore the former. That



That they are not Non-members, was before proved in *Propos. 2. Partic. 3.* and if not members of the *same church* with their parents, then of *no other*. For if there be no reason sufficient to state them members of that church where their parents have covenanted for them, and where ordinarily they are baptized and do inhabit, then much less is their reason to make them members of any other, and so they will be members of no particular church at all; and it was before shewed, that there is no ordinary and orderly standing estate of church-members, but in some particular church. 3. *The same covenant-act is accounted the act of parent and child*: but the parents covenanting rendered himself a member of this particular church: Therefore so it renders the child also. How can children come in with and by their parents, and yet come into a church, wherein and whereof their parents are not, so as that they should be of one church, and the parents of another? 4. *Children are in an orderly and regular state*: for they are in that state, wherein the order of Gods covenant, and his institution therein, hath placed them; they being members by virtue of the covenant of God. To say their standing is disorderly, would be to impute disorder to the order of Gods covenant, or irregularity to the Rule. Now all will grant to be most orderly and regular, that every christian be a member in some particular church, and in that particular church, where his regular habitation is, which to children usually is, where their parents are. If the Rule call them to remove, then their membership ought orderly to be translated to the church, whither they remove. Again, order requires that the child, and the power of government over the child, should go together. It would bring shame and confusion for the child to be from under government, *Prov. 29. 15.* and Parental and Ecclesiastical government concurring, do mutually help and strengthen each other. Hence the parent and the child must be members of the same church; unless the child be by some special providence so removed, as that some other person hath the power over him.

2. *That when these children are grown up, they are personally under the Watch, Discipline and Government of that Church*, is manifest: for, 1. Children were under Patriarchal and Mosaiical discipline of old, *Gen. 18. 19. & 21. 9, 10, 12. Gal. 3. 3.* and therefore under congregational discipline now. 2. They are within the church, or members thereof, (as hath been, and after will be further proved) and therefore subject to church-judicature, *1 Cor. 5. 12.* 3. They are disciples, and therefore under discipline in Christs school, *Matth. 28. 19, 20.* 4. They are in church-covenant, therefore subject to church-power, *Gen. 17. 1.* with chap. 18, 19. 5. They are subjects of the kingdom of Christ, and therefore under the Laws and Government of his Kingdom, *Ezek. 37. 25, 26.* 6. Baptism leaves the baptized (of which number these children are) in a state of subjection to the authoritative teaching of Christs Ministers, and to the observation of all his commandments, *Mat. 28. 19, 20.* and therefore in a state of subjection unto Discipline. 7. Elders are charged to take heed unto, and to feed (i.e. both to teach and rule, compare *Ezek. 34. 3, 4.*) All the flock or church; over which the holy Ghost hath made them overseers, *Acts 20. 28.* That children are a part of the flock, was before proved: and so Paul accounts them, writing to the same flock or church of Ephesus, *Eph. 6. 1.* 8. Otherwise Irreligion and Apostacy would inevitably break into churches, and no church-way left by Christ to prevent or heal the same; which would also bring many church-members under that dreadful judgement of being let alone in their wickedness, *Hosea 4. 16, 17.*



**Proposition 4th.** These Adult persons are not therefore to be admitted to full communion, merely because they are and continue Members, without such further qualifications, as the Word of God requireth thereunto.

The truth hereof is plain, 1. From 1 Cor. 11. 28, 29. where it is required, that such as come to the Lords Supper, be able to examine themselves, and to discern the Lords body; else they will eat and drink unworthily, and eat and drink damnation, or judgment to themselves, when they partake of this Ordinance. But meer membership is separable from such ability to examine ones self, and discern the Lords body: as in the children of the Covenant, that grow up to years is too often seen. 2. In the old Testament, though men did continue Members of the Church, yet for ceremonial uncleanness they were to be kept from full Communion in the holy things, Lev. 7. 20, 21. Numb. 9. 6, 7. & 19. 13. 20. yea and the Priests and Porters in the Old Testament had special charge committed to them, that men should not partake in all the holy things, unless duly qualified for the same, notwithstanding their membership, 2 Chron. 23. 19. Ezek. 22. 26. & 44. 7, 8, 9, 23. and therefore much more in these times, where moral fitness and spiritual qualifications are wanting, membership alone is not sufficient for full communion. More was required to adult persons eating the Passeeover, then meer membership: therefore so there is now to the Lords Supper. For they were to eat to the Lord, Exodus 12. 14. which is expounded in 2 Chron. 30. where, keeping the Passeeover to the Lord, verse 5. imports and requires exercising Repentance, verse 6. 7. their actual giving up themselves to the Lord, verse 8. heart preparation for it, vers. 19. and holy rejoycing before the Lord, verse 21. 25. See the like in Exr. 6. 21, 22. 3. Though all Members of the Church are subjects of Baptism, they and their children, yet all Members, may not partake of the Lords Supper, as is further manifest from the different nature of Baptism and the Lords Supper. Baptism firstly and properly seals Covenant-holiness, as circumcision did, Gen. 17. Church-membership, Rom. 15. 8. planting into Christ, Rom. 6. and so Members, as such, are the subjects of Baptism, Matth. 28. 19. But the Lords Supper is the Sacrament of growth in Christ, and of special communion with him, 1 Cor. 10. 16. which supposeth a special renewing and exercise of Faith and Repentance in those that partake of that Ordinance. Now if persons, even when adult, may be and continue Members, and yet be debarred from the Lords Supper, until meer qualifications for the same do appear in them; then may they also (until like qualifications) be debarred from that power of Voting in the Church, which pertains to Males in full Communion. It seems not rational, that those who are not themselves fit for all Ordinances, should have such an influence referring to all Ordinances, as Voting in Election of Officers, Admission and Censures of Members doth import. For how can they who are not able to examine and judge themselves, be thought able and fit to discern and judge in the weighty affairs of the house of God? 1 Cor. 11. 28, 31. with 1 Cor. 5. 12.

**Proposition 5th.** Church-members who were admitted in minority, understanding the Doctrine of Faith, and publicly professing their assent thereto; not scandalous in life, and solemnly owning the Covenant before the Church, wherein they give up themselves and their children to the Lord, and subject themselves to the Government of Christ in the Church, their children are to be Baptized.

This is evident from the Arguments following.

These children are partakers of that which is the main ground of baptizing any children whatsoever, and neither the parents nor the children do put in any barre to hinder it.

1. That they partake of, that which is the main ground of baptizing any, is clear; Because interest in the Covenant is the main ground of title to Baptism, and this these children have. 1. Interest in the covenant, is the main ground of title to Baptism; for so in the Old Testament, this was the ground of title to Circumcision, Gen. 17. 7, 9, 10, 11. to which Baptism now answers, Col. 2. 11, 12. and in Acts 2. 38, 39. they are on this



this ground exhorted to be baptized, because the promise or covenant was to them and to their children. That a member, or one in covenant, as such, is the subject of Baptism, was further cleared before in Propos. 1. 2. That these children have interest in the covenant, appears; Because if the parent be in covenant, the child is also: for the Covenant is to parents and their seed in their generations, Gen. 17. 7, 9. The promise is to you and to your children, Acts 2. 39. If the parent stand in the Church, so doth the child among the Gentiles now, as well as among the Jewes of old, Rom. 11. 16, 20, 21, 22. It is unheard of in Scripture, that the progress of the covenant stops at the infant-child. But the parents in question are in covenant, as appears, 1. Because they were once in covenant, and never since discovenanted. If they had not once been in covenant, they had not warrantably been baptized; and they are so still, except in some way of God they have been discovenanted, cast out, or cut off from their covenant relation, which these have not been: neither are persons once in covenant, broken off from it according to Scripture, save for notorious sin, and incorrigibleness therein, Rom. 11. 20. which is not the case of these parents. 2. Because the tenor of the covenant is to the faithful and their seed after them in their generations, Gen. 17. 7. even to a thousand generations, i. e. conditionally, provided that the parents successively do continue to be keepers of the covenant, Exodus 20. 6. Deut. 7. 9, 11. Psal. 105. 8. which the parents in question are, because they are not (in Scripture account in this case) forsakers or rejecters of the God and Covenant of their Fathers: see Deut. 29. 23, 26. 2 Kings 17. 15--20. 2 Chron. 7. 22. Deut. 7. 16.

2. That these parents in question do not put in any barre to hinder their children from Baptism, is plain from the words of the Proposition, wherein they are described to be such as understand the doctrine of Faith, and publicly profess their assent thereto: therefore they put not in any barre of gross Ignorance, Atheism, Heresy or Infidelity. Also they are not scandalous in life, but solemnly own the covenant before the Church; therefore they put not in any barre of Profaneness, or Wickedness, or Apostacy from the covenant, whereinto they entred in minority. That the infant-children in question do themselves put in any barre, none will imagine.

The children of the parents in question, are either children of the covenant, or strangers from the covenant, Ephes. 2. 12. either holy or unclean, 1 Cor. 7. 14. either within the Church or without, 1 Cor. 3. 12. either such as have God for their God, or without God in the world, Eph. 2. 12. But he that considers the Proposition, will not affirm the latter concerning these children: and the former being granted, infer their right to Baptism.

To deny the Proposition, would be, 1. To straiten the grace of Christ in the Gospel dispensation, and to make the Church in New Testament times in a worse case, relating to their children successively; then were the Jewes of old. 2. To render the children of the Jewes when they shall be called, in a worse condition then under the legal administration; contrary to Jer. 30. 20. Ezek. 37. 23, 26. 3. To deny the application of the initiatory seal to such as regularly stand in the Church and Covenant, so whom the Mosaiacal dispensation, nay the first institution in the covenant of Abraham, appointed it to be applied, Gen. 17. 9, 10. John 7. 12, 23. 4. To break Gods covenant by denying the initiatory Seal to those that are in covenant, Gen. 17. 9, 10, 14.

Confederate visible Believers, though but in the lowest degree such, are to have their children baptized; witness the practice of John Baptist and the Apostles, who baptized persons upon their first beginning of their Christianity. But the parents in question are confederate visible Believers, at least in some degree: For, 1. Charity may observe in them sundry positive Arguments for it; witness the terms of the Proposition, and nothing evident against it. 2. Children of the godly qualified but as the persons in the Proposition, are said to be faithful, Tit. 1. 6. 3. Children of the Covenant (as the Parents in question are) have frequently the beginning of grace wrought in them in younger



younger years, as Scripture and experience shews: Instance, *Joseph, Samuel, David, Solomon, Abijah, Josiah, Daniel, John Baptist and Timothy*. Hence this sort of persons shewing nothing to the contrary, are in charity, or to Ecclesiastical reputation, visible Believers. 4. They that are regularly in the Church (as the parents in question be) are visible Saints, in the account of Scripture (which is the account of truth:) for the Church is in Scripture account, a company of Saints, 1 Cor. 14. 33. & 1. 2. 5. Being in covenant and baptized, they have Faith and Repentance indefinitely given to them in the Promise, and sealed up in Baptism, Deut. 30. 6. which continues valid, and so a valid testimony for them, while they do not reject it. Yet it doth not necessarily follow, that these persons are immediately fit for the Lords Supper; because though they are in a latitude of expression to be accounted visible believers, or in numero fidelium, as even infants in covenant are, yet they may want that ability to examine themselves, and that special exercise of Faith, which is requisite to that Ordinance; as was said upon Propos. 4th.

The denial of Baptism to the children in question, hath a dangerous tendency to Irreligion and Apostacy; because it denies them, and so the children of the Church successively, to have any part in the Lord; which is the way to make them cease from fearing the Lord, Josh. 22. 24, 25, 27. For if they have a part in the Lord, i. e. a portion in Israel, and so in the Lord the God of Israel, then they are in the Church, or Members of it, and so to be baptized, according to Propos. 1. The owning of the children of those that successively continue in covenant to be a part of the Church, is so far from being destructive to the purity and prosperity of the Church, and of Religion therein, (as some conceive) that this imputation belongs to the contrary Tenet. To seek to be more pure than the Rule, will ever end in the impurity in the issue. God hath so framed his covenant, and consequently the constitution of his Church thereby, as to design a continuation and propagation of his Kingdom therein, from one generation to another. Hence the covenant runs to us and to our seed after us in their generations. To keep in the line, and under the influence and efficacy of this covenant of God, is the true way to the Churches glory: To cut it off and disavow it, cuts off the prosperity of Zion, and hinders it from being (as in the most glorious times it shall be) an eternal excellency, and the joy of many generations. This progress of the Covenant establisheth the Church, Deut. 29. 13. Jer. 30. 20. The contrary therefore doth disestablish it. This obligeth and advantageth to the conveyance of Religion, down to after generations; the care whereof is strictly commanded, and highly approved by the Lord, Psal. 78. 4, 5, 6, 7. Gen. 18, 19. This continues a nursery still in Christs Orchard or Vineyard, Isa. 5. 1, 7. the contrary neglects that, and so lets the whole run to ruin. Surely God was an holy God, and loved the purity and glory of the Church in the Old Testament: but then he went in this way of a successive progress of the Covenant to that end, Jer. 13. 11. If some did then, or do now decline to unbelief and apostacy, that doth not make the faith of God in his covenant of none effect, or the advantage of interest therein inconsiderable: yea, the more holy, reforming and glorious that the times are or shall be, the more eminently is a successive continuation and propagation of the Church therein designed, promised and intended, Isa. 60. 15. & 59. 21. Ezek. 37. 25--28. Psal. 102. 16--28. Jer. 32. 39.

The parents in question are personal, immediate, and yet continuing Members of the Church.

1. That they are personal members, or members in their own persons, appears, 1. Because they are personally holy, 1 Cor. 7. 14. not parents onely, but [your children] are holy. 2. They are personally baptized, or have had Baptism, the seal of membership, applied to their own persons: which being regularly done, is a divine testimony that they are in their own persons members of the Church. 3. They are personally under discipline, and liable to Church-censures in their own persons; vide Propos. 3. 4. They are personally (by means of the covenant) in a visible state



of salvation. To say they are not members in their own persons, but in their parents, would be as if one should say, They are saved in their parents, and not in their own persons. 5. When they commit iniquity, they personally break the covenant; therefore are personally in it, *Jer. 11. 2, 10 Ezek. 16.*

2. By the like Reasons it appears that children are immediate members, as to the essence of membership, (*i. e.* that they themselves in their own persons are the immediate subjects of this adjunct of Church-membership) though they come to it by means of their parents covenanting. For as touching that distinction of *mediate* and *immediate*, as applied to membership (which some use) we are to distinguish, 1. Between the efficient and the essence of membership: 2. Between the instrumental efficient or means thereof, which is the parents profession and covenanting; and the principal efficient, which is divine Institution. They may be said to be *mediate* (or rather *mediately*) members, as they become members by means of their parents covenanting, as an instrumental cause thereof: but that doth nothing vary or diminish the essence of their membership. For divine institution giveth or granteth a real and personal membership unto them, as well as unto their parents, and maketh the Parent a publique person, and so his act theirs to that end. Hence the essence of membership, *i. e.* Covenant-interest, or a place and portion within the visible Church, is really, properly, personally and immediately the portion of the child by divine gift and grant, *Joshua 22. 25, 27.* their children have a part in the Lord, as well as themselves. A part in the Lord there, and Church-membership (or membership in Israel) are terms equivalent. Now the children there, and a part in the Lord, are Subject and Adjunct, which nothing comes between, so as to sever the Adjunct from the Subject; therefore they are immediate subjects of that Adjunct, or immediate members. Again, their visible ingrafting into Christ the head, and so into the Church his body, is sealed in their Baptism: but in ingrafting, nothing comes between the graft and the stock: Their union is immediate; hence they are immediately inserted into the visible Church, or immediate Members thereof. The little children in *Deut. 29. 11.* were personally and immediately a part of the people of God, or members of the Church of Israel, as well as the parents. To be in covenant, or to be a covenantee, is the *formalis ratio* of a Church-member. If one come to be in covenant one way, and another in another, but both are in covenant or covenantees, (*i. e.* parties with whom the covenant is made, and whom God takes into Covenant) as the children here are, *Gen. 17. 7, 8.* then both are in their own persons the immediate subjects of the *formalis ratio* of membership, and so immediate members. To act in covenanting, is but the instrumental means of membership, and yet children are not without this neither: For the act of the parent (their publick person) is accounted theirs, and they are said to enter into covenant, *Deut. 29. 11, 12.* So that what is it that children want unto an actual, compleat, proper, absolute and immediate membership? (so far as these terms may with any propriety or pertinency be applied to the matter in hand) Is it covenant-interest, which is the *formalis ratio* of membership? No, they are in covenant: It is divine grant and institution, which is the principal efficient? No, he hath clearly declared himself, that he grants unto the children of his people a portion in his Church, and appoints them to be members thereof. Is it an act of covenanting, which is the instrumental means? No, they have this also reputatively by divine appointment, making the parents a publick person, and accounting them to covenant in his covenanting: A different manner and means of conveying the covenant to us, or of making us members, doth not make a different sort of membership. We now are as truly, personally and immediately members of the body of saln mankind, and by nature heirs of the condemnation pertaining thereto, as Adam was, though he came to be so by his own personal act, and we by the act of our publick person. If a Prince give such Lands to a man and his heirs successively, while they continue loyal; the following heir is a true



true and immediate owner of that Land, and may be personally dis-inherited, if dis-loyal, as well as his father before him. A member is one that is according to Rule (or according to Divine Institution) *within* the visible Church. Thus the child is properly, and personally or immediately. Paul casts all men into two sorts, those *within*, and those *without*, i.e. *members* and *non-members*, 1 Cor. 5. 12. It seems he knew of no such distinction of *mediate* and *immediate*, as puts a *medium* between these two. *Object.* If children be compleat and immediate members as their parents are, then they shall immediately have all Church-priviledges, as their parents have, without any further act or qualification. *Ans.* It followeth not, All priviledges that belong to members, as such, do belong to the children as well as the parents: But all Church-priviledges do not so. A member as such, (or all members) may not partake of all priviledges; but they are to make progress both in memberly duties and priviledges, as their age, capacity and qualifications do fit them for the same.

3. *That their membership still continues in adult age, and ceaseth not with their infancy,* appears, 1. Because in Scripture persons are *brok'n off*, onely for notorious sin, or incorrigible impenitency and unbelief, not for growing up to adult age, Rom. 11. 20. 2. *The Jew-children circumcised* did not cease to be members by growing up, but continued in the Church, and were by vertue of their membership received in infancy, bound unto various duties, and in special unto those solemn personal professions that pertained to adult members, not as then entring into a *new membership*, but as making a progress in *memberly duties*, Deut. 26. 2-10. & 16. 16, 17 with Gal. 5. 3. 3. Those relations of *born-servants* and *subjects*, which the Scripture makes use of to set forth the state of children in the Church by, Lev. 25. 41, 42. Ezek. 37. 25. do not, (as all men know) cease with infancy, but continue in adult age. Whence also it follows, that one special end of membership received in infancy, is to leave persons under engagement to service and subjection to Christ in his Church, when grown up, when they are fittest for it, and have most need of it. 4. There is no ordinary way of cessation of membership but by *Death, Dismission, Excommunication, or Dissolution of the Society*: none of which is the case of the persons in question. 5. Either they are when adult, members or non-members: if non-members, then a person admitted a member, and sealed by Baptism, not cast out, nor deserving so to be, may (the Church whereof he was still remaining) become a non-member, and out of the Church, and of the unclean world; which the Scripture acknowledgeth not. Now if the Parent stand member of the Church, the child is a member also: For now *the root is holy, therefore so are the branches*, Rom. 11. 16. 1 Cor. 7. 14. The Parent is in covenant therefore so is the child, Gen. 17. 7. and if the child be a member of the visible Church, then he is a subject of Baptism, according to Propos. 1.

Proposition 6. *Such Church-members, who either by death, or some other extraordinary Providence, have been inevitably hindered from publick acting as aforesaid, yet have given the Church cause in judgement of charity, to look at them as so qualified, and such as had they been called thereunto, would have so acted, their children are to be Baptized.*

This is manifest. 1. Because the main foundation of the right of the child to priviledge remains, viz: Gods institution, and the force of his covenant carrying it to the generations of such as continue keepers of the covenant, i.e. not visibly breakers of it. By vertue of which institution and covenant, the children in question are members, and their membership being distinct from the parents membership, ceaseth not, but continues notwithstanding the parents decease or necessary absence: and if members, then subjects of Baptism. 2. Because the parents not doing what is required in the fifth Proposition, is through want of opportunity; which is not to be imputed as their guilt so as to be a bar to the child's priviledge. 3. God reckoneth that as done in his service, to which there was a manifest desire and endeavour, albeit the acting of it were hindered; as in David to build the Temple, 1. Kings 8. 18, 19. in Abraham to sacrifice his



his Son, Heb. 11: 17. according to that in 2 Cor. 8. 12. where there is a willing mind, it is accepted according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not: which is true of this Church-duty, as well as of that of Alms. It is an usual phrase with the Antients to style such and such Martyrs *in volo*, and Baptized *in volo*, because there was no want of desire that way, though their desire was not actually accomplished. 4. The terms of the Proposition import that in charity, that is here done interpretatively, which is mentioned to be done in the fifth Proposition expressly.

**Proposition 7th.** The members of Orthodox churches, being sound in the Faith, and not scandalous in life, and presenting due testimony thereof, these occasionally coming from one church to another, may have their children Baptized in the church whether they come, by virtue of Communion of churches: but if they remove their habitation, they ought orderly to covenant and subject themselves to the Government of Christ in the church where they settle their abode, and so their children to be Baptized. It being the churches duty to receive such unto communion, so farre as they are regularly fit for the same.

1. Such members of other Churches as are here described, occasionally coming from one Church to another, their children are to be baptized in the Church whither they come, by virtue of Communion of Churches: 1. Because he that is regularly a member of a true particular Church, is a subject to Baptism, according to Propos. 1st. & 2d. But the children of the parents here described are such according to Proposition 5th. & 6th. therefore they are meet and lawful subjects of Baptism, or have right to be baptized. And Communion of Churches infers such acts as this is, viz. to baptize a fit subject of Baptism, though a member of another Church, when the same is orderly desired. (See Platform of Discipline, chap. 15. sect. 4.) For look as every Church hath a double consideration, viz. 1. Of its own constitution and communion within it self. 2. Of that communion which it holds and ought to maintain with other Churches: So the Officer (the Pastor or Teacher) thereof, is there set, 1. To administer to this Church constantly; 2. To do acts of Communion occasionally, (viz. such as belong to his Office, as Baptizing doth) respecting the members of other Churches, with whom this Church holds, or ought to hold communion. 2. To refuse Communion with a true Church in lawful and pious actions, is unlawful, and justly accounted Schismatical. For if the Church be true, Christ holdeth some communion with it; therefore so must we: but if we will not have communion with it in those acts that are good and pious, then in none at all. Total separation from a true Church is unlawful: But to deny communion in good actions, is to make a total separation. Now to baptize a fit subject, as is the child in question, is a lawful and pious action, and therefore by virtue of Communion of Churches, in the case mentioned to be attended. And if Baptism lawfully administered, may and ought to be received by us for our children in another true Church, where Providence so calls us, as that we cannot have it in our own, (as doubtless it may and ought to be:) then also we may and ought in like case to dispense Baptism, when desired, to a meet and lawful subject, being a member of another Church. To deny or refuse either of these, would be an unjustifiable refusing of Communion of Churches, and tending to sinful separation.

2. Such as remove their habitation, ought orderly to covenant and subject themselves to the Government of Christ in the Church, where they settle their abode, and so their children to be baptized: 1. Because the regularly baptized are disciples, and under the Discipline and Government of Christ: But they that are absolutely removed from the Church whereof they were, so as to be incapable of being under Discipline there, shall be under it nowhere, if not in the Church where they inhabit. They that would have Church-priviledges, ought to be under Church-power: but these will be under no Church-power, but as lambs in a large place, if not under it there where their settled abode is. 2. Every Christian ought to covenant for himself and his children, or professedly to give up himself and his to the Lord, and that in the way of his Ordinances, Deut.



Deu. 26. 17. & 12. 5. and explicate covenanting is a duty, especially where we are called to it, and have opportunity for it: nor can they well be said to covenant implicitly, that do explicitly refuse a professed covenanting, when called thereunto. And especially this covenanting is a duty, when we would partake of such a Church-privilege, as baptism for our children is. But the parents in question will now be professed covenanters no where, if not in the Church where their fixed habitation is. Therefore they ought orderly to covenant there, and so their children to be baptized. 3. To refuse covenanting and subjection to Christ's Government in the Church where they live, being so removed, as to be utterly incapable of it elsewhere, would be a walking disorderly, and would too much favour of profaneness and separation; and hence to administer baptism to the children of such as stand in that way, would be to administer Christ's Ordinances to such as are in a way of sin and disorder, which ought not to be, 2 Thess. 3. 6. 1 Chron. 15. 13. and would be contrary to that Rule, 1 Cor. 14. 40. *Let all things be done decently and in order.*

Quest. II. **W**Hether according to the Word of God there ought to be a Consociation of Churches, and what should be the manner of it?

Ans. The Answer may be briefly given in the Propositions following.

1. Every Church or particular Congregation of visible Saints in Gospel-order, being furnished with a Presbytery, at least with a Teaching Elder, and walking together in truth and peace, hath received from the Lord Jesus full power and authority Ecclesiastical within itself, regularly to administer all the Ordinances of Christ, and is not under any other ecclesiastical Jurisdiction whatsoever. For to such a Church Christ hath given the Keyes of the Kingdom of Heaven, that what they bind or loose on earth, shall be bound or loosed in heaven, Mat. 16. 19. & 18. 17, 18. Elders are ordained in every Church, Acts 14. 23. Tit. 1. 5. and are therein authorized officially to administer in the Word, Prayer, Sacraments and Censures, Mat. 18. 19, 20. Acts 6. 4. 1 Cor. 4. 1. & 5. 4, 12. Acts 20. 28. 1 Tim. 5. 17. & 3. 5. The reprovng of the Church of Corinth and of the Asian Churches severally, imports they had power, each of them within themselves, to reform the abuses that were amongst them, 1 Cor. 5. Rev. 2. 14, 20. Hence it follows, that Consociation of Churches is not to hinder the exercise of this power, but by counsel from the Word of God to direct and strengthen the same upon all just occasions.

2. The Churches of Christ do stand in a sisterly relation each to other, Cant. 8. 8. being united in the same Faith and Order, Eph. 4. 5. Col. 2. 5. to walk by the same Rule, Phil. 3. 16. in the exercise of the same Ordinances for the same ends, Eph. 4. 11, 12, 13. 1 Cor. 16. 1. under one and the same political Head, the Lord Jesus Christ, Eph. 1. 22, 23. & 4. 5. Rev. 2. 1. Which Union infers a Communion suitable thereunto.

3. Communion of Churches is the faithful improvement of the gifts of Christ bestowed upon them for his service and glory, and their mutual good and edification, according to capacity and opportunity, 1 Pet. 4. 10, 11. 1 Cor. 12. 4, 7. & 10. 24. 1 Cor. 3. 21, 22. Cant. 8. 9. Rom. 1. 13. Gal. 6. 10.

4. Acts of Communion of Churches are such as these:

1. Heavy care and prayer one for another, 2 Cor. 11. 28. Cant. 8. 8. Rom. 1. 9. Coloss. 1. 9. Eph. 6. 18.

2. To afford relief by communication of their Gifts in Temporal or Spiritual necessities, Rom. 15. 26, 27. Acts 11. 22, 29. 2 Cor. 8. 1, 4, 14.

3. To maintain Unity and Peace, by giving account one to another of their publick actions, when it is orderly desired, Acts 11. 2, 3, 4, 18. John 22. 13, 21, 30. 1 Cor. 10. 32. and to strengthen one another in their regular Administrations; as in special by a concurrent testimony against persons justly censured, Acts 15. 41. & 16. 4, 5. 2 Tim. 4. 15. 2 Thess. 3. 14.

4. To seek and accept Help from, and give help unto each other:



1. In case of Divisions and contentions, whereby the peace of any Church is disturbed, Acts 15.2.
2. In matters of more then ordinary importance, Prov.24.6.& 15.22, as Ordination, Translation, and Deposition of Elders, and such like, 1 Tim. 5.22.
3. In doubtful and difficult Questions and controversies; Doctrinal or Practical, that may arise, Acts 15.2,6.
4. For the rectifying of mal-Administrations, and healing of Errors and Scandals, that are unhealed among themselves, 3 John ver. 9, 10. 2 Cor. 2.6. 11. 1 Cor. 15. Rev. 2.14,15, 16. 2 Cor. 12.20,21. & 13.2. Churches now have need of help in like cases, as well as churches then. Christs care is still for whole churches, as well as for particular persons; and Apostles being now ceased, there remains the duty of brother-love, and mutual care and helpfulness incumbent upon churches, especially Elders for that end.
5. In love and faithfulness to take notice of the Troubles and Difficulties, Errors and Scandals of another church, and to administer help (when the case manifestly calls for it) though they should so neglect their own good and duty, as not to seek it, Exod. 23.4,5. Prov. 24.11, 12.
6. To admonish one another when there is need and cause for it; and after due means with patience used, to withdraw from a church or peccant party therein, obstinately persisting in Error or Scandal; as in the Platform of Discipline (chap. 15. sect. 2. partic. 3.) is more at large declared, Gal. 2.11, 14. 2 Thess. 3.6. Rom. 16.17.
5. Consociation of churches, is their mutual and solemn Agreement to exercise communion in such acts, as aforesaid, amongst themselves, with special reference to those churches, which by providence are planted in a convenient vicinity, though with liberty reserved without offence, to make use of others, as the nature of the case, or the advantage of opportunity may lead thereunto.
6. The churches of Christ in this countrey having so good opportunity for it, it is meet to be commended to them, as their duty thus to consociate. For 1. Communion of churches being commanded, and consociation being but an Agreement to practise it, this must needs be a duty also, Psal. 119. 106. Nehem. 10.28,29. 2. Paul an Apostle sought with much labour the conference, concurrence and right hand of fellowship of other Apostles; and ordinary Elders and churches have not less need each of other, to prevent their running in vain, Gal. 2.2,6,9. 3. Those general Scripture rules touching the need and use of counsel and help in weighty cases, concern all Societies and Polities, Ecclesiastical as well as civil, Prov. 11.14. & 15.22. & 20.18. & 24.6. Eccl. 4.9,10,12.4. The pattern in Acts 15. holds forth a warrant for councils, which may be greater or lesser, as the matter shall require. 5. Concurrence and communion of churches in Gospel times, is not obscurely held forth in Isa. 19.23,24,25. Zeph. 3.9. 1 Cor. 11.16. & 14.32,36. 6. There hath constantly been in these churches a profession of communion, in giving the right hand of fellowship at the gathering of churches, and Ordination of Elders; Which importeth a consociation, and obligeth to the practice thereof. Without which we should also want an expedient and sufficient cure for emergent church difficulties and differences: with the want whereof our Way is charged, but unjustly, if this part of the Doctrine thereof were duely practised.
7. The manner of the Churches agreement herein, or entring into this Consociation, may be by each Church's open consenting unto the things here declared in answer to this 2d. Question, as also to what is said thereabout in chap. 15. & 16. of the Platform of Discipline, with reference to other Churches in this Colony and Countrey, as in Propos. 5th is before expressed.
8. The manner of exercising and practising that Communion, which this consent or agreement specially tendeth unto, may be, by making use occasionally of Elders or able Brethren of other churches, or by the more solemn Meetings of both Elders and Messengers in lesser or greater councils, as the matter shall require.



# *Anti-Synodalia Scripta Americana.*

O R,

A Proposal of the Judgment of the Dissenting Messengers of the Churches of New-England Assembled, by the Appointment of the General Court, March 10. 1662. whereof there were several Sessions afterwards.

This *Script* or *Treatise*, by Gods Providence, falling into the hands of a Friend to the Truth, and the Contents thereof, &c. was published for the Churches good, although without any Commission from the Dissenting Brethren; which they are desired not to be offended with.

Wherein there is an Answer to the Arguments alleadged by the Synode

*Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they be of God, 1 Joh. 4. 1.*

## *The Preface to the Reader.*

*Gentle and Judicious Reader.*

**I**T is great cause, that thou (and all those, into whose hands this Tractate shall come) shouldst have an account of the reason of the publishing of it; this being a time so unreasonable for starting of controversies, especially about Religion: And the truth is, that the persons engaged in this dissent, could much rather have chosen to have suppressed this Treatise, not only (as the Poet adviseth) *nonum prematur in annum* — *si quid tu scripseris olim*, but eternally; and as an untimely birth to have buried it in everlasting darkness: But our tenent hath found such course entertainmen, both in the Synod, and also in the general Court, as we apprehend, (where we might have expected that more Patrons of it would have appeared) and also, though it be no other then the Doctrine of all the Congregational Churches in *Holland, England, Ireland, and New-England*, also in *New-Haven, and Plimouth* Jurisdictions, yea and also, that it hath been both the Judgment and general practise of the Churches in the *Bay Patent* (some few inconsiderable excepted) for the space of 30. years; yet now this Doctrine is laden with such reproaches of Antichristianism and Anabaptism, &c. that it is at present made, and will appear to be hereafter *μῆλον ἑρίδος* the apple of contention in all the reformed Churches, which is a marvellous sad calamity, & event contrary to the Apostles Doctrine, 1 Cor. 12. 13. Eph. 4. 2. &c. where Baptism is made an argument & a sign of unity among Christians.

A

There



There are three or four main Objections against the publishing of our judgment about this controversie about Baptism (for about the second Question, as it is laid down by the Synod in several Propositions, and the proofs thereof, we agree with them) we shall express the main Objections, which are these.

Obj. 1. *The sad Consequents of the publishing our dissent, as the case is, may be afterwards an offence of heart to us, & may breed too late repentance to us.*

Ans. 1: We must not look to Consequents in doing our duty, but the goodness of our Cause: as for Consequents, we say with *Hester, ch. 4. 16.* *If we perish, we perish*, that is, we resign up our selves & cause to the will of God.

2. We profess, That we cannot see, how it can stand with peace of Conscience in the Bay Churches, to fall now to the leaving off their former practise, in the dispensation both of Baptism and the Lords Supper, and to take up a new manner of dispensation of them, and to rest herein: We have often heard it, and still judge it to be sound Divinity, *That the leaving off, or forsaking of sin, is not sufficient to true Repentance*; there must be confessing of sin, and publick and particular confession of publick and scandalous sins, (as this is conceived to be) *1 Sam. 12. 19.*

It must needs be thought by all sound Divinity to be a most grievous sin to deprive so many poor infants (as have lived and dyed without Baptism for 30. years together, whom Christ hath commanded to be baptized (as now it is thought) for if it be said of the *Pharisees, Luk. 7. 29, 30.* *that because they were not baptized by John Baptist, that they rejected or made null the Counsel of God against themselves*: Or to compare it with the former verse, it is a not-justifying of God, or condemning of him, and of his truth and counsel concerning mans salvation, and that against themselves, to their own misery and destruction; must we not needs think it, that the Churches have lyen so long in so grievous a neglect of an Ordinance of God, that it is of the same nature, and somewhat worse to neglect or disdain the Counsel of God against, not only themselves, but against so many hundreds of poor infants, whom the Kingdom of God (as we plead) belongs unto.

Anabaptism is imputed to us, because we hold and maintain (as we are perswaded by Scripture Rules) that all infants are not to be baptized, as our Brethren in their sense, or far more ought to be baptized; but this is only a matter of opinion or conscience, not convinced of any other way: but to omit this in practise, and that so long a time, must needs charge our Churches with practical Anabaptism out of their own mouths.

*Hæc dici potueri, & non potueri refelli?*

So we have cause to tremble at a greater sin (which must needs be justly imputed to our Churches) that concerns the Lords Supper, That we have admitted all sorts that were personally in Covenant, to the Lords



Supper; which now we deny to many, unless they make it manifest after covenanting, *That they can discern the Lords body, and examine themselves, &c.* though they are in personal covenant, and acknowledged to be members of the Church, as much as any other: If this be the Regular administration, then the other was irregular, and brought guiltiness to many of the body and blood of Christ, and was eating and drinking of judgment to our selves.

Obj. 1. *That the publishing of these things will trouble the peace of the Churches; they are the troublers of Israel, that raise Objections, and hold forth their private Judgments against so many learned men.*

Ans. 1. We may justly enquire in this case, That if any persons are possessed of house or lands or other goods, and other men break in upon them to take away their lawful possessions, or so much as to call them into question; I say we may justly enquire which of these are justly chargeable to be troublers of *Israel*; they that break in upon others, that before were quiet, whilst they were permitted to hold their own, to rob them of their estates, or these latter, that strive to hold their own? *Psal. 35. 26. David accounts them the troublers, that devise matters against them that are quiet in the Land: And Elijah had another judgment about the troublers of Israel, they are such as forsake the commandment of the Lord, 1 King. 18. 18.*

2. We do highly prize the peace of the Churches, and it cannot be purchased at too dear a rate, if it may be had with truth, holiness, and with Scripture bounds in this case, *Zach. 8. 19. Heb. 12. 14.* neither of which we by reason of our shallowness, can see in the case pressed.

3. Learned *Usher*, in a Sermon of his at the Court, told the King that was present, *That it made neither for peace, nor the finding out of the truth, to suppress and silence by Authority one side; no, this is the way to bury the truth and peace in one grave.* We know the fire is beaten out by striking the flint: Although differences be sad, yet the truth that comes to light by them, may recompence the sadness. You cannot beat out a place for a window to let in light, but you must endure some trouble; Children will think the house is pulling down, but the father knows the benefit that will come by it; there will be rubbish and dust raised by this means (as in sweeping houses) but the light that is let in, will easily remove it: So in this controversie.

*Burr. Heart-Divisions, p. 62.*

4. The dissenters were called by the Lord, and the authority of the Court, to report their testimony to the truth; they do no more then their duty, and their faithfulness to God and his people call for it; were it their own cause only, they were not worthy to breath, if they would not with *Nazianzen*, as formerly *Jonah*, rather be cast into the Sea themselves, if so be all might be calm in publick; but this cause *Dei et Reipub.* It would be an horrid dishonour to God, that so many professing



people, should forsake country and kindred, and their fathers houses, to follow Christ into a land not sown, to enjoy the pure worship of God, and yet now with incredible unanimity, and speedy consent, to change their way, and remove their bounds of worship, which they had observed so long.

Furthermore, we desire nothing, but to retain and maintain those dispensations, which we have so dearly bought, and so long enjoyed without interruption, before this pleaded for conversion of N. E. *Non unimor est virtus quam qua recepta tueri.* Judg. 11. 24. Should we not possess what the Lord our God hath given us to possess?

Obj. 3. *They are meer Novellists and Innovators that contend for these things amongst us; our most learned Ministers were of the Synods mind.*

Ans. 1. It is true that some were thus minded as the Synode, and as many as large in Judgment as to soulder with Parish-Churches; but the general practise was hitherto observed, as the dissenters here plead; and see the general judgment of all the Learned Elders (divers of whom do now retreat, and *pull out their camera*) in the books entituled *Church-Government and Church-Covenant*, with general application in our Answer to 32. Quest. Anno 1639. pag. 22, 23. *Viz.*

*Such children, whose father and mother of them beleevers, and sanctified, are counted by the Apostle (as it seems to us) not federally holy, but unclean, whatever their Ancestors were, and therefore we baptise them not. If you can give us a sufficient answer to take us off from that Scripture, 1 Cor. 7. 14. which seems to limit the federal holiness or sanctity to the children, whose next parents, one or both were beleevers; and would gladly bearken to you therein.*

And further, pag. 23. they speak thus:

*We do believe that all Members of Churches (none excepted) ought to be Saints & faithful in Christ Jesus, Eph. 1. 1. 1 Cor. 1. 2. Col. 1. 2. Phil. 1. 1. And thereupon we account it our duty to use all lawful and convenient means whereby God may help us to discern, whether those that offer themselves for Church-Members, be persons so qualified or no; And therefore first we hear them speak concerning the gift and grace of justifying faith in their souls, & the manner of Gods dealing with them, in working it in their hearts: Secondly, We hear them speak what they do believe concerning the doctrine of faith, so taking a tryal what measure they have of the good knowledge of the Lord, as knowing that without knowledge men cannot well examine themselves, and discern the Lords Body, as Church-Members ought to do, when they come to the Lords Table. And hereby we would prevent (as the Lord shall help us) the creeping in of any into the Church, that may be infected with corrupt opinions, of Arminianisme, Familisme, &c. or any other dangerous errour against that faith which was once delivered to the Saints, as knowing how easily such men, if they were admitted, might infect others,*  
and



and perhaps destroy the faith of some. For both these we have our warrant as in generall from those places which shew how Church-Members ought to be qualified, that they ought to be Saints faithful in Christ Jesus, &c. So in special from that Math. 3. 6. Acts 19. 18. & Acts 8. 37, 38. where men before they were admitted, made profession of Repentance toward God, and Faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ; for it is expressly said, They confessed their sins; they confessed, and shewed their deeds, they professed their faith in Jesus Christ the Son of God: Thirdly, when this is done, those that by manifestation of repentance and faith, are approved as fit Members for a Church, do openly profess their subjection to the Gospel of Christ, and all the Ordinances of God in that Church wherein they joyn as Members, &c.

By these and many other Testimonies it may appear, that what the Dissenters hold and defend, is the old-way of New-England, and what is now pleaded for, and to be introduced, is an innovation.

Furthermore, Whereas it may be wondered at, that the Dissenters are so few, and the Consenters (being able, learned, and Godly Magistrates and Ministers) are so many: This need not seem strange, seeing that divers of the Elders preached and practised, some time before this new Doctrine of late years, who were Members of the Synode, and of them it may truly be said, That thus they were engaged, and it is strange that after vows they should be called to make enquiry; besides diverse of the Messengers being no Logicians, and so unable to answer Syllogismes, and discern Ambiguities, were over-borne by the many opposers. And lastly, The corruption of man most inclines to walk in the broadest way, though the straight way may be never so clear unto him, and to affect the stronger side, especially when persons that are eminent in place and power, and learning and piety too are so linked together; we are ready (as James saith) to have the faith of Christ and every truth of Christ in respect of persons. John 7. 4, 8.

Now least the discourse should seem to any to be needless, being that all other Congregational Churches, that we can know of, hold no other positions, then what is defended here about the subject of Baptisme; yet in declining times the best had need *en m'istia* to be confirmed, no doubt but this temptation will spread further, when more than the third part of the Stars of Heaven here are swept down, as it is prophesied, Rev. 12. which Chapter if it be well weighed together with the former, would seem more plainly to suit with Gods wonderful providence in the planting and proceedings of the Churches of New-England, then any other times or histories that are extant, that we know of, this in a few years, perhaps months, it will appear.

See this in the Declaration of the Faith and Order of the Congregationall Churches met at the Savoy, ch. 29. of Baptisme 4.

Further-



Furthermore, Let the world know that the Lord hath still a few names in N. E. who hold fast his name and are stedfast in the faith, and order of the Gospel, and do detest the abominations of Antichrist, and all the limbs of that monstrous feind out of the bottomless pit.

And let it not be an offence to any Christian that there hath been found one like to *Urijah* the Priest, that would set up the <sup>2 King. 16. H.</sup> Altar of *Damascus* among us to thrust out the Brazen Altar of the Lords institution, or one of the Elders (viz. Mr. *Thomas Parker* Pastor of the Church at *Newberry* in *New-England*, that hath published a Book pleading for Episcopacy, viz. that entituled *Moses and Aaron*, one that hath verified that Hebrew proverb *Chomet Ben jain* Vinegar is the Son of wine; one that was the Son of that Reverend & Learned Divine Mr. *Robert Parker* that was *Flagellum Episcoporum*, which in that learned and elaborate Book *De Politeia Ecclesiastica*, hath confuted that posthumous Book of Mr. *James Noife* for the defence of Bishops power over Elders; and with that strength of Argument that the Gates of Hell shall never be able to prevail against; yet here is found *πῶλος ἀντιζῶν*, such a cold Kirching against his Dam, as the Proverb is.

The conclusion that the Author laid down in that poor Pamphlet, Prop. 8. page 62. is this, *That some Elders may have superiority of Jurisdiction over other Elders according to Christs institution.*

For the proof of this there are fifteen Arguments alledged, which if they were all formed into Syllogismes, would appear ridiculous among young Scholars in Universities; and such as cannot possibly produce the conclusion alledged, there being no institution of Christ proposed or mentioned therein. That which seems to come neereſt to a ſemi-proof, is of the Episcopacy of *Timothy* and *Titus*, which no doubt were Bishops in the ſenſe that all Presbyters are, but in any ſuperiour rank; but of Evangelists to fancy them, is groundleſs, as may appear both in Mr. *Paul Baines* his *Diaceſan* tryal, and that elaborate diſcourſe of the Unbiſhoping of *Timothy* and *Titus*, as alſo in *Perkins Polit. Eccleſ.* But now that the Superiority of the Hierachy over other Elders, croſſes Christs institution; ſee *John* 18. 36. where he ſaith, *That my Kingdom is not of this world.* And *Math.* 20. 26. *The Kings of the Gentiles have dominion.* — But it ſhall not be ſo amongſt you. *1 Pet.* 5. 2. *Not as being Lords over Gods Heritage, but examples to the Flock.* And verſ. 1. *Peter* the Apoſtle himſelf, calleth himſelf *A fellow Elder* to the reſt of Elders; Adde thoſe places where all the Church-Officers of Divine Inſtitution are mentioned, as *Rom.* 12. 7, 8. *1 Cor.* 12. 28. Yet let any *Urijah* ſhew us any footing for a Prelate in them.

It would be long to alledge in a Preface what *Cartwright*, *Whitaker*, *Beza*, *Piſcator*, *Chamier*, have written againſt the Hierachy:

Let



*Anti-Synodalia, &c.*

Let for a close Dr. Reynolds in his conference with Hart, Chap. 8. be consulted withall, where he shews the rise and original of Hierarchy, where he saith, 1. That Elders were ordained in every City, *Acts* 14. 23. and that to feed the Flock, whereof the Holy Ghost had made them Bishops, *Acts* 20. 28. 2. That all Presbyters were equal. 3. That a President amongst them at their meetings (which was but *pro tempore*) was appointed not by divine right, but by the consent and choice of Presbyters. 4. That a Bishop had power only in his own City, as every Elder in his Flock, &c. 5. After all this by Ambition, the Hierarchy, and Metropolitans, and Patriarcks and Popes climbed up so high to their Princely Dominering. But further raking in this Dunghill may happily be unsavoury (should we stay upon it?) to our selves and others. Let the Prolocutor to Moses and Aaron set up his Tabernacle there, surely no gracious and truly wise man will envy his preferment.

Neither let the whole Generation of the just in N. E. (which no doubt are many) be condemned; if the Common-Praying Book finds some Advocates in N. E. Who can find stakes and pluck them forth out of that rotten hedge, (as is said) as fit materials, and utensils to edifie Gods people in a Congregational Church, and that as an extraordinary solemnity; Surely if such a thing were done or spoken in a day appointed, (some think *intempestive*) for publick rejoycing; this hath occasioned not a little sadnesse to many godly hearts in N. E. such things are a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation.

But least that the Readers should be staied over-long in the Porch, it is time to open a doore to let him pass into the inner roomes, and the Lord poure down upon his heart a spirit of discerning, and right judgement, as in other things, so in the Laws and Ordinances of Gods house.

*Philalethes.*

To



To the Honoured Governour of the  
Massachusetts, JOHN ENDICOT Esq;

Together with the rest of the Honoured  
Bench, and the Court of Deputies.

A plaine Proposal of the Judgement of the Mes-  
sengers of the Churches Dissenting from the Major  
part, assembled in the SYNODE at Boston, touching the first  
Question, which was

*What is the subject of Baptisme?*

The Preface.

**W**Hat hath been delivered in writing by that Reverend Divine  
Mr. Jer. Burroughs, in his *Irenicum*, we must needs premise for  
our selves by way of preamble to our following discourse; His words are  
these: *He that differs in Judgement from wise, learned, and Godly men;*  
1. *Had need to spend much time in prayer and humiliation before the Lord:*  
2. *Preserve due reverence in his heart, and shew due respect to them accor-*  
*ding to their worth:* 3. *In all things wherein he can agree, he should be*  
*more carefull to manifest all possible observance and respect unto them;*  
4. *In what still his conscience will not suffer him to agree with them, to take*  
*it as an affliction to him.*

Thus much, We that are disagreeing in Judgement from so Honour-  
ed and Reverend persons, eminent, either in Place, Learning or Godli-  
nesse, that have different apprehensions from us, about any Question  
propounded by this Honoured Court; we trust, if our hearts deceive us  
not, we may truly professe before the Lord and his people, on our own  
behalf, that this businesse and our dissent therein, hath cost us many  
prayers and tears, and much affliction of spirit, and conflicts with sad  
temptations about it: And also that we have desired to maintain not  
only Charitable, but Reverend thoughts, affections and respects in our  
hearts towards all such as are otherwise minded; desiring to be jealous  
of our selves, least that we should through any prejudice and partiality  
swerve or turn aside from the truth.

Moreover it is apparent in what we have yielded, and voted with the  
rest, so far as, that rightly considered and practised, it would silence all  
sad complaints against the many great and prevailing corruptions of  
youth amongst us.

Will we request, that this our dissent may not be imputed to self-  
conceit, arrogancy, or desire of affectation of singularity, nor any will-  
fullnesse, though we are but few Dissenters in comparison.

It is not so deemed of Nicodemus, who alone stood out against the  
Chief



Chief Priests and Pharisees, *John* 7. 50. Nor of *Gamael*, *Acts* 5. Nor of *Eliab* or *Micaiah* in the Old Testament; nor of *Paph Natus*, that in the Counsel of *Nice* stood against 318 Bishops; nor of the few dissenting Brethren in the Assembly of Divines in *England*; therefore why should we be otherwise repured of?

Besides there may be conscience of duty in such a case, that will drive a few to adventure hard to deliver their own souls, and for their own peace sake to stand up to discharge their obligation to God; because they know that otherwise they should contract guilt unto themselves, if they should not bear witness so far as they are able. Yea, there may be much self-denial in so doing, in bearing the brunt of so much contestation and opposition. It is no little self-denial for persons to incur the displeasure of men of such place, parts and quality, yea happily dear friends and relations, to lay his name, reputation open to reproach, to rowe against so great a stream, and upon the point to hazard their all upon such events and sad after-claps, as may be their utter undoing.

But that we may not interrupt your weighty occasions with tedious discourse, we do humbly present these further considerations for our defence.

1. We begin with that *Chamier* speaks of Baptisme, (*Lib. 5. cap. 15. §. 15.*) in these words:

*Certe nemo improbare que-  
at in tam sanctis rebus non  
profanandis, diligentiam,  
ne quantum fieri poterit late-  
ant Simonides; et vero prove-  
runt suis Apostoli exemplis,  
ut Philippus, Acts 8. 37.*

That is, surely none can disallow diligence (used) for the avoiding of the prophanation of so holy things; least that as much as may be *Simon Magusses* lye not hid; but besides the Apostles have gone before us by their examples, as *Philip*, *Acts* 8. 37.

Our diligence and care is only this, that the holy Ordinances of Baptisme should not be profaned; it is not only one, but many *Simon Magusses*, that we desire to be kept out; and surely *Philip* that said to the *Eunuch*, *If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest be baptized*, said in effect, *That unlesse thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest not be baptized*: And this is all that we contend for in persons that are of age.

2. Though this disquisition be not about fundamentals and essentials of faith, and Christian Religion, yet it reacheth to the fundamentals and essentials of order in Church Administrations, which are, *Ezek. 44. 5. The entering in, and the going forth of the Sanctuary*; i. e. The admission of Members, and the casting of them forth.

3. That the case concerns not onely that Theory, but our continual practice in the worship of God, which if it be contrary to our  
B light



light must needs be a continual stumbling block in our way, and grievance to our consciences, because *whatsoever is not of faith is sin*, Rom. 4. 23.

4. Because every Christian is forbidden to take up Religion, or any way of worship upon trust from man, *Mar. 7. 7.* Yea we are commanded to try all things, and hold fast that which is good, so that we may abstain from all appearance of evil, *1 Thes. 5. 21, 22.*

5. That there is the whole Churches Communion in Baptisme, as well as in the Lords Supper, *1 Cor. 12. 13.* And if that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump, *1 Cor. 5. 6.* How much more will a great deale? And it is apparent unto all what a corrupt masse of Unbelievers shall by this change throng into the fellowship of Gods People, and the children of strangers, uncircumcised in heart, shall be brought into Gods Sanctuary to pollute it, contrary to Gods Word, *Ezek. 44. 7, 9.*

6. That our selves (and many more of our brethren in our respective Churches) do account our selves bound by Covenant and the Oath of God (as that which is the revealed will of God) unto that Order, and dispensation of the worship of God (as far as it may be, and we have light) that hath hitherto been received, and peaceably practised in our Churches above 30 yeares; all which time the Lord hath so blessed both our Common-wealth and Churches, that Jesus Christ did shew himselfe wonderfull amongst us, as was well held forth openly at *Boston* by many instances of great deliverances and wonders that the Lord hath wrought in former times for *N. E.* But since the motion of this change, what the Lords dealing hath been, and still is, we leave to the prudent to judge, we may glory of this new light, but we fear it will prove but glorying in our shame.

These Considerations (and we might adde many more) we doe humbly present to the Honoured Court, which we hope may so far forth find acceptance, as to be held forth and left as a Testimony to the world, as well as to Gods people here or in remote parts, that is desired by us to be given to the truth (as we are perswaded) howsoever it is resented by others.

And this we account a matter of greatest concernment, seeing that our Lord Jesus Christ professed, *John 18. 37.* *To this end was I borne, and for this cause came I into the world, to bear witnesse to the Truth;* and he added that *Every one that is of the Truth heareth his voice.* And this is no doubt exemplary to all Christs Servants, in treating of those truths that do concern Christs Kingdom (of which the Text speaks) and though many will say of these truths contemptuously, *What is truth?* not regarding of it, yet this is an eminent employment



ment to bear witness to the Truth (in their stations) in these times, and to hold forth a Testimony to the worth thereof, and whatsoever evil entertainment it meets withall in the world at present, yet our comfort is, That every one that is of the Truth, will at one time or other own it as the voice of Christ.

And it was for the enjoyment of the Truth, that we have put our lives in our hands, and have said to our Fathers we have not seen them, neither have we acknowledged our brethren or kindred, that we might keep the Word of the Lord, and the Covenant of our God, *Deut. 33. 9.* and for the fear of the losse thereof, our trouble is, that we hear so many sad complaints of tender consciences, or the Lovers of *Sion*, that sit like old *Ely* by the way-side, watching, whose hearts do tremble for the Ark of God, expecting some such sad News, ere-long, as he and others used to hear of the departure of the glory from *Israel*.

Finally, We do humbly crave at the Lords hands acceptance of, and a blessing upon our poor endeavours, and from this Honoured Court a candid interpretation, and encouraging answer, and shall not cease to importune the Lord for his presence with you, and direction to you, to know what *Israel* ought to do, especially in the great motions and transactions of the perilous last times, and that the Lord would make you Repairers of the Breach, and Restorers of the Path to dwell in.



# THE ORDER OBSERVED

## TREATISE.

**T**He Matters that we have propounded unto us to treat of, are such as in Scripture Language are termed by the name of *Order*, which the Lord would have observed in his house. Therefore it would be a great Indecorum, and very unfuitable if we should observe no *Order* in handling of them, but go confusedly to work; and we think it convenient somewhat to alter the Method that we have followed in the writing that we have presented to the Honoured General Court, because that now we are to speak to many meaner persons and capacities which need to have all things with all possible plainness represented unto them.

This therefore we shall premise, touching the *Order* that we shall proceed in, treating onely of the first Question propounded by the Honoured Court, altogether omitting the second Question wherein we do fully agree with the rest of the Synod in all the Propositions laid down about it, together with the proofs thereof.

1. We shall explaine the meaning of the first Question, and shew what we conceive to be the scope and intent thereof.

2. We shall give our Answer to the Question, with the confirmation thereof.

3. We shall discusse (as far as shall be requisite) the several Propositions laid down by the major part, and shew how far we do dissent, with the Reasons of our dissenting.

4. We shall answer those Arguments especially, that are thought to be of greatest strength to confirm the Propositions that have been last presented to us; and these we desire to dispatch with what brevity we can, and the matters in hand may permit: Thus of the *Order* intended. Now follows the first Question, the sense and meaning whereof we shall briefly unfold, according as we do apprehend it.

Question



Question I. *What is the Subject of Baptisme?*

That all things may be cleared as we go, one word needs to be explained, that is, What is meant by *Subject*? Therefore

1. By *Subject* is meant here not the Subject of inherence, which are those that are already baptized; there is no need to make a Question of that; but the recipient Subject is meant; that is, such as are appointed by God in holy Scripture to receive it; that hath been thought difficult to find, and hath cost much labour and dispute to many Divines, and they have still different apprehensions about it; that is here enquired after.

2. The Receiving Subjects of baptisme, may be considered either as common or proper, common as men, women and children, proper, to whom it agrees, both to all, and onely, and Reciprocally: in this sense it is conceived by some, that all Believers unbaptized are the proper Subject of baptisme; by some the faithful and such as are of age; by others the confederate how remotely soever; and lastly by others the believing and inchurched parents, and their seed if unbaptized.

3. We must adde, that the proper and receiving Subjects of baptisme are either mediate as Believers or Converts not yet in Covenant, or immediate as Church-Members or their seed unbaptized. So that, now we may lay down the full meaning of the Question to be this,

*Who are the proper and the immediate Subjects of Baptisme, as to the receiving of it?* Thus much concerning the first particular propounded.

**T**He second thing propounded by us is the grand enquiry, that is, the Answer to the Question propounded by the General Court.

To make way for the resolution and answer of this, Let these two things be premised: 1. That Baptisme is an Ordinance and Seal of the New-Testament, and must be therefore administred as for the manner of it according to Gospel-rules: We must remember that great charge given unto the Apostles, *Math. 28. 20.* together with Christs own institution of Baptisme [*Teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you, and Loe, I am with you always to the end of the world.*] The promise of Christs presence with his Ministers and Churches by his God-head, Majesty, Grace and Spirit, is annexed to his own Institutions; for he saith [*Teaching them to observe what I have commanded you.*] There is a remarkable Emphasis in every word. 1. There must be teaching, and therefore sound knowledge. 2. There must also be observing, and therefore practise. 3. The things practised must be things commanded. 4. Not only some things commanded must be practised, but all things



things whatsoever. 5. And especially, let the two Pronounes be remembered [ *I and You* ] *I have commanded you*; that is, Christ himself commanded the Apostles, viz. for the Churches to the end of the world. These Pronounes are exclusive, first of mens traditions and inventions, and all will-worship: Secondly, of *Mosaical* rites and manners of Administrations in Gospel-times; our Lord Jesus Christ hath been faithful not only as *Moses* a Servant of God, but as a Son over his own house, *Heb. 3. 6*. Having left nothing to the prudence of man, or the Pædagogy of *Mosaical* Administrations: so in reference to Baptisme, Christ taught his Apostles the matter and manner of it, &c. far differing from the administration of Circumcision; Circumcision was first appointed for a Domestical, and then for a National Church, whereas Baptisme is appointed for a Congregational. And let that be minded, *Heb. 9. 1*. with the *Dutch* Annotations upon it; therefore *Also the first Covenant had indeed judgements (or institutions) according to which the worship of God was to be regulated then, and that worldly Sanctuary; i. e. they were but earthly things, and worldly in comparison of heavenly things, and it wil be a great debasing & murtherizing of it, to apply and wire-draw all the Circumcision-observations & rules unto it. We deny not but that in some respect Baptisme may be called Gospel-Circumcision, as Col. 2. 11, 12. as being set up in place of Circumcision, & to be administred to confederate parents and their seed; but though it hath a likeness to Circumcision, yet the similitude runs not upon four feet, as some would brutishly make it. The sum and issue here is, That Baptisme being a New-Testament Seal, is tyed to Christs commands and rules, given to the Apostles, and by them delivered to Gospel-Churches, and the Subject of Baptisme must be sought out and found in them.*

The Second thing we premise is this, That the shortest and surest way, by the consent of all Divines, to end all controversies, especially about the VVorship of God, and the manner of it, is to find out how it was from the beginning, [and at the first institution of it: as Christ told the *Jewes* about Marriage, *Mat h. 19. 8*. So we are to doe by considering the first institution of Baptisme by Christ, and by his Apostles, according to his command: If we can find sufficient footing here, then we have found enough for our Consciences to rest in, for nothing can be like this, or added unto this. Whenas Christ instituted the Apostles and Baptisme, he said *Math. 28. 18. All Power is given unto me in Heaven and Earth*; That is, all Authority, faculty, and ability, as to the head of the Church, to governe it by mine own Lawes and Appointments, and to bless my people in the observation of them. These



These things being premised ; the places that concern the institution of Baptisme, in the New-Testament by our Saviour Christ and his Apostles, are these, *Math. 28. 19, 20. Mark 16. 15, 16. Act. 2. 38, 39.* to which we adde, the practise of *John Baptist* and the Apostles, are such as were divinely warranted and inspired.

In these places to pass over other things in them, there are the persons that are commanded to be baptized, with their qualifications plainly expressed, that doe shew who are instituted by Christ and our Apostles to be the subjects of Baptisme : In *Matthew* they are those of all Nations, both *Jewes* and *Gentiles*, that are capable of teaching, so as to be made Disciples by the word preached ( and so it is usually expounded by the Learned ) and it is added farther, *teaching them to observe, &c.* This concerns plainly only grown persons, that are capable of instruction, who are become true Christians by beleeving, as *Act. 11. 26. Luke 14. 26, 33. Act. 26. 28. John 8. 31. Luke 9. 23.*

In *Mark* are all men and women ( called *every creature* by an Hebrew phrase ) viz. that are beleevers, and brought to the Faith by the Gospel preached to them ; for it follows, *He that believes, and is baptized, &c.* your saving Faith ( to the Judgment of Charity ) is required before Baptism.

In the *Acts*, chap. 2. 38, 39. this is most fully declared us : First, They are Church Members, and such as are in Covenant, that the Apostle speaks of ; this shews, that persons to be baptized must be Church Members, and in Covenant.

2. Though they were before pricked at the heart for their sins, yet it is required of the unbaptized parents, they should repent [ *Repent ye* ] of their unbelief, and their crucifying of the Lord of glory, and their other sins : This is spoken personally to them that moved the Question, saying, *Men and Brethren, what shall we doe ?* The Answer is, *You that are of age, Repent.*

3. There is also true faith necessarily implied, both as going before repentance, and the condition of remission of sins, which is mentioned *vers. 38.* See also *vers. 44. They that believed.*

4. Whereas they might say, what shall become of our children, for we have cursed our selves and them, saying, *His blood be upon us, and upon our Children* ; he answers for that in the third person [ *Let every one of you be baptized ;* ] he doth not say, as



it is translated, *Be baptized every one of you, &c.* for that seems only to be commanded to grown persons, who are commanded to repent: But (*let every one of you be baptized*) this reacheth parents and children, whether absent or present, even every one to whom the Covenant promise is made, and it is made to the repenting Parents, and their children for their parents sake, and no others! For the mentioning of the promise else were impertinent as to their children, except in order to Baptism: Here the next seed of converts are subjects.

5. The encouragement and reason of this command, is, that the promise is to you and to your children, namely the promise of the Covenant, whether that which was made to *Abraham* and his seed; or related before out of *Joel*, ch. 2. 23. Or (as we conceive) both of these. Where we see that the Covenant promise reacheth the faithful and their children, as also the commandment to baptize them; and this place may stop the mouths of all Anabaptists, if they will believe and receive Scripture.

6. Whereas it might be objected, that the believing and repenting *Jewes*, and their children, have right to Gods promise and baptism: but what shall become of the repenting *Gentiles*, and their seed to the end of the world? the *Jewes* they were near to God, but the *Gentiles* they were afarre off. *Ans.* He answers, that they that were afarr off were *Gentiles*, as the *Gentiles* were said to be, *Ephes.* 2. 13. yea, the phrase may comprehend both *Jewes* and *Gentiles* to the end of the world, as some learned Interpreters judge.

7. The qualification acquired of all adult persons must be noted, that they must be such as are called, (*as many as the Lord your God shall call*) to all them that are called, *Jewes* and *Gentiles*, the Covenant promise is extended to them and to their seed.

Obj. But it may be said, *If they are outwardly called, it is enough.*

*Ans.* No; but the word used in the Text signifies effectual Calling, for it signifies to call to himself, *Math.* 10. 1. *Mark* 3. 13. and *Mark* 6. 7. or to call forth to fight against their enemies, (*as Novarin, in locum*) this therefore signifies both an outward and inward calling, so far as the Church is able to judge; whence it appeareth, that the Commandement and Promise alio is both to the called *Jewes* and *Gentiles*, and that unto the end of the world.



2. Another Qualification is, that they were not only in fellowship, but also admitted to full communion, *ver.* 42. They continued stedfastly—in breaking bread, or the Lords Supper. See also *Acts* 6. of their noting.

8. Here is an example of three thousand Converts that were added to the Church, that is, to the Apostolick and Primitive and first Gospel Church (which is the pattern of all future Ages, and the purest and holiest, that had such a multitude of Saints in it) and they that gladly received the Word were baptized; it is a vile mistake to say, that hence, all that hear the Word should be baptized. For first, many hear the Word, that receive it not, and many seem to receive it that receive it not willingly and gladly; yet, but what word did they so receive? the Text saith, *that they received (his word)* that is, *Peters*, commanding them from the Lord, to repent and believe, and to be baptized and their Children: the meaning is, that they professed and manifested subjection thereto by practice.

9. There is an undoubted Miracle from Heaven for the confirmation of this way: for it is no doubt but that the promise of the Lord by *Peter* unto them, *ver.* 38. (*that they should receive the gift of the holy Ghost*; that is, such as the Apostles had received in this Chapter, or the visible gifts of the holy Ghost, besides inward gifts and spiritual Graces) was accomplished.

Thus all these places do undeniably prove out of the Gospel, and Christs and the Apostles institution of Baptism, who are the proper subjects of Baptism; which any Christian heart may tremble to swerve from, either by adding thereto, or taking away from thence, either by corrupt changing Christs institution, or any other way from whatsoever humane Authority to turn away from these: so, that learned *Drusius* did say well, that, *Laicus cum Scriptura loquens contra totam Synodum audiendus*, i. e. a mean Lay-man speaking with the Scripture is to be heard, though a whole Synod of learned men were against him; much more many of Gods faithfull and conscientious people and Ministers, having both Christs and his Apostles authoritative institution of the proper subjects of Baptism, they should be heard, and their assertions or testimonies not stifled or smothered, though all the Oecumenical Councils were opposite unto them; yea, though an Angel from Heaven should teach otherwise; although we will not dare to say, let him be *Anathema*, yet we will say, let not his doctrine be received.

Object. Happily some will say, that Baptism was instituted before this, and that from Heaven by John Baptist, which promiscuously baptized all the Jewes that were in Covenant, *Matth.* 3.

Ans. 1. It is granted, that *Johns* Baptism was instituted by the Lord  
C for



for the *Jews*, who were baptized by him into the Jewish Church (for the Gospel-Church for all Nations could not be set up before the Judaical was pulled down by the death of Christ) therefore after our Saviour his Resurrection, Baptism was instituted first for a Gospel-Ordinance for all the Churches.

2. *John Bapt.* baptized none but such as confessed their sins, *Mat. 3. 6.* and he baptized not all, but he rejected the *Pharisees* and *Sadducees*, and he called upon them for true Repentance for all their vain pleading of *Abrahams Covenant*, *v. 7. 8. 9.* yea, he preached also faith in Christ to them, *Acts 19.* and required New-obedience of those people, *Luke 3.* as *Piscator* there observes.

3. Suppose that *John Baptist* was not so exact in his baptism, yet he tells them of Christ, *v. 12.* that he should come with his Fan in his hand, and winnow out the chaffe from the Wheat, and purge the Church from such light and unprofitable Ruffe, and throw them into the fire of hell; who dare then bring in bundles of chaffe into the Barn-floor, when Christ hath thrown it out?

But we hasten now to gather from all these places, which do fitly expresse the institution of Baptism, the Answer to the Question, what is the subject of Baptism, and it is thus.

*That visible Believers and Converts in full Communion in an instituted Church (being unbaptized) together with their next seed in Minority, are the proper and immediate subjects of Baptism, as to the receiving of it.*

Well agreeing with this Answer of ours, is that which is laid down by the Reverend Mr. Richard Walker, in his Catechism, Chap. 26. his words are these: Q. *Who ought to be baptized?* An. Men of years when once they are converted to the faith and joyned to the Church, and such Infants whose Parents both, or one of them, are so converted and joyned, *Acts 8. 37. 16. 15. 36. 8. 12. Acts 2. 39. Gen. 17. 12. 1 Cor. 7. 14.* This Catechism was printed Anno 1650. with an Epistle before it, declaring the approbation of the Reverend Mr. John Cotton, and Mr. John Wilson of Boston. The proof of this is laid down before, and is readily laid down in this Reason; These are proper and immediate subjects of Baptism, to whom Christ in the Gospel-institution thereof hath appointed it.

But visible Believers and Converts in full communion with an instituted Church, are the persons being unbaptized, to whom Christ in the Gospel-Institution of Baptism hath appointed it; Therefore visible Believers, &c.

I suppose none amongst us will deny the former, and the Assumption is Scripture expressly; then see the conclusion how it follows thence.

It may be that many are unwilling that the Minor should be true (and there-



therefore will cavil and speak against it) but we persuade our selves that it will be found true at the great day of the Lord, whose words are established for ever in Heaven; and Jesus Christ will not ask leave of men whether his word or theirs shall stand: and he will say to such, as *Rom. 9. 20.* O man, who art thou that disputest against God? We will wait to hear what Answer will be produced against this.

It will be objected that Baptism was instituted implicitly when Circumcision was instituted by Gods commandment given to *Abraham, Gen. 17.* and Circumcision was successively continued thereupon unto his posterity, and therefore so must Baptism be.

*Ans. 1.* If an implicate institution of Baptism should be granted to be then given, yet without an explicite and plain institution, it should be of no validity or binding.

2. The explicite institution must interpret the other, and limit (as it doth) the extent thereof; and this is that which we build upon.

3. The Covenant made with *Abraham*, and the circumcision of his seed was appointed upon the same terms that Baptism was: that is, that he should walk with God by faith and obedience.

4. The *Gemites* are taken to be *Abraham's* spiritual seed, *Rom. 4.* and *Gal. 3.* upon no other termes but treading in the steps of *Abraham's* Faith.

5. Though the *Jewes* in after Generations were successively circumcised, yet we say with Christ, from the beginning it was not so; and Christ, *Act. 2. 38.* limits the Covenant to the believing *Jewes* and their next seed.

Object. But all the Christian and Protestant Churches do admit to Baptism all successively whose Parents live within the bounds of any visible Church, though it be but a Parish Church: and the customs of the Churches should be observed.

*Ans. 1.* Whatsoever the practice of the Churches is now, yet from the beginning it was not so; witness the institution mentioned.

2. Custom swerving from Institution, is but *vetustas erroris*; the elder an error or sin is, the worse it is, and more displeasing unto God, as it appears, *Ezek. 23. 43.* and *Ezek. 25. 15.*

Object. This Doctrine that we hold, is charged with Novelty, that it is a new Doctrine.

*Ans. 1.* That which was from the beginning, is antienter then all that followes after.

2. This hath been objected by Papists against the Protestant Religion, and after them by the Prelates against Non-conformists, as *Cartwright, Ames, Venner, Greenham*; and other objections and arguments against this conclusion we shall consider after, and as they come in our way; but this only we will say, that unlesse this foundation be taken away, all that can



be alledged to the contrary is to be accounted but as straw and stubble, that will be burnt up with the fire of Gods Word, when the foundation shall stand for ever, whatsoever tryal shall come.

We might easily abound in alledging other Scriptures and Presidents and testimonies of most approved Divines consonant to this; but this would be, but casting drops into the Sea: Christ saith, *John 5. 34. I receive not testimony from man*; This truth and doctrine needs no mans testimony for the confirmation of it, being sufficiently confirmed by his own authority.

Now it followes that we should proceed to the consideration of the Answer that is given by the Major part of the Synod, upon which we desire to enter with trembling and as much circumspection as possibly may be, because we do look at the Answer to the Questions propounded, as the great work of these latter ages of the Churches, prophesied of *Rev. 11.* which is the measuring of the Temple (which is also foretold *Ezek. 41. &c.*) and not long after this followes the killing of the Witnesses, which is looked upon as instant, or in present Execution.

Therefore the measuring of the Temple, that great work of Christ, being the subject of this disquisition, there had need to be a very carefull eye to attend unto the pattern in the Mount; Were it only to measure the outward Court, called *the great Court*, *2 Chron. 4. 9.* whether even Infidels, Strangers and Idolaters might come, that we would not be troubled with; for Christ forbids the measuring of this outward Court, because it is given to the Gentiles, *Rev. 11. 2.* howsoever they may have goodly pretences (as Idolaters and Papists have) that they are the Temple, which are the Synagogue of Sathan; it is the true Temple and the Holy place which is proposed to be measured, which we have thought to have been exactly done by those precious Seers which the Lord hath sent into these parts, and to have been practised with much purity hitherto by the Churches of Christ amongst us. But we do easily conceive and confesse, that this enquiry and search is still of great concernment, and may make by Gods blessing very much to the edification of the Churches, and the continual preservation of the purity of Gods Worship, and the promoting of that great work of Christ, the purging of the Temple, and the driving of the buyers and sellers out of the Temple. But we would not stay in this diversion.

Now the Answer to the first Question is sub-divided and cut out into several propositions, that have made the more work to sow them again together.

*Proposition*



*Proposition the First.*

“**T**hat according to Scripture, the Members of the visible Church are the Subjects of Baptism. Hence we may take notice that in the first session of the Synode, the Expression of this first Proposition was this, viz.

“Those that according to Scripture are Members of particular visible Churches, are the proper Subjects of Baptism: This we could rather have assented to, then the later; which instead of it to amend it, is last expressed; for this speaks but of one Church, but the former of Churches in the plural Number. The visible Church may be spoken, and intended to mean the Universal visible Church, either as a general word comprehending all particular Churches as *Species* or kinds of it; or it may be taken indefinitely, to signify any particular visible Church; in both which senses we assent to it: or it may be taken (as some conceive) for an *Integrum*, or whole containing all particular Churches as Parts of one whole; in which sense we cannot entertain it; seeing that many of our Worthies have abundantly refuted this Notion, as especially that *magister*, precious Mr. *Hooker* in his Survey, &c. And our Reverend brethren in their Answer to the Nine Positions, page 66. say, We know no such Church in the New Testament as a visible Catholick Church, and will undertake to prove it by Scripture grounds, &c.

But we need not to stay upon this, seeing that our brethren have plainly told us their meaning.

*Proposition the Second.*

“**T**hat the members of the visible Church, (that is, particular visible Churches) according to Scripture, are confederate visible Believers, that is, visible true Believers, and their infant seed. First, Note we hence who are visible Believers, that is, visible true Believers, as far as the Church can in Charity judge: this is according to Scripture, *Ephes. 1. 1. Col. 1. 2. Acts 26. 18. 1 Thes. 1. 36. 2 Thes. 2. 3, 4.* Besides that faith requisite to Church-Members, signifies Visible Faith; for the Church cannot take notice of Faith hidden in the heart; for this see *Col. 2. 5.* Now Faith is made visible partly by open profession, *Rom. 10. 10.* and partly by the Fruits, as *James 2. 18. Phil. 1. 4, 8.*

Secondly, It is to be considered, that confederate Believers, and their



their Infant-Seed, are distinguished, and that rightly: For their Infant-Seed, though in Covenant, are not in any Scripture as we know, called *Believers*; How can they believe that know not their right hand from their left? *James 4.11.* Neither have Infants Faith either actual or habitual, say *Whitaker, Beza and Piscator*; For Faith is begotten in the mind either mediately or immediately, either extraordinarily and miraculously, or ordinarily by the Word preached, *Rom. 10. 14.* Which of these two soever we take, if Faith be in Infants, it must be a Miracle: For without a Miracle they cannot hear the Word or understand it, but if they believe by extraordinary Revelation, this also is a Miracle; and we find not that such divine Revelations are given to any such Prophets and Apostles: Thus now we should have Miracles daily wrought, which we hold are ceased.

Thirdly, Whereas the Infant-Seed of Believers are called Members, in the general we grant it; yet we conceive that the Scripture puts a difference between several sorts of Members of Churches; Some being only federally holy, as the Infant-Seed, *1 Cor. 7. 14.* Others sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of the Lord, *1 Cor. 6. 11.* Some having personally and publickly laid hold on the Covenant, *Isa. 56. 6.* Others having only parental and partial Right, as born of one or both confederating Believing Parents, *1 Cor. 7. 14.* Thus the Lord speaks, *Deut. 4. 37.* *Because the Lord loved their Fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them.* So *Deut. 10. 15.* and *Acts 2. 38, 39.* And suitable to this is the distinction of Doctor Ames (*Medul. l. 1. cap. 32. sect. 3.*) of Members into perfect and imperfect, where he saith, That Children are not such perfect Members of the Church as those that are in full Communion; And whereas some alledge, That Membership is a Word of Relation, and therefore cannot admit degrees of more or less: We say, That it is a clear exception from that general Rule; viz. That such Relations, the foundation whereof is Quality or Action, do admit of diversity of degrees; as similitude is a relation grounded on some quality; thence one thing may be more or less like to another; so likewise Calfaction is a relation grounded on Action; and we know that one thing, as Red-hot-Iron may heat or burn more then another, or then the flame; in both which respects the Membership of Infants Faith, and act of confederation being grounded on the Parents Faith, is rightly distinguished from the Membership of such as are adult, which is grounded on their own Faith and Act of Confederation; so that Membership may admit of degrees of Perfection and Imperfection: so this being premised for the meaning of this Proposition, we shall forbear to multiply Scripture-grounds or Reasons to prove it, which is done by our Reverend Brethren, with whom we agree thus far; only we shall add one thing more



as touching a part of the second Proposition in the last Expression, which is, "That Children in minority, whose next Parents, one or both are in Covenant, are the Infant-seed to be baptized: For the Explication of this; First, We must needs count it to be a very ambiguous and dark expression, when it is said, (whose next Parents are one or both in Covenant) we must needs discern that to be in Covenant, is put for confederate visible Believers, which later we could have closed with according to our former explication of it; but we cannot conceive but being in Covenant is sufficient to transmit: for thus the Covenant and Baptism are entailed to a thousand Generations; therefore to be in Covenant may be conceived two wayes: first, Barely to be under the parental Covenant: so *Ishmael* and *Esau* were, and yet the Covenant was not established with them to descend to their Posterity. Secondly, To lay hold on the Covenant with presupposed Faith and Repentance also, *Isa. 56. 6.* as well as personal entering into it. The former may be taken, and yet we count it insufficient to capacitate the next seed to Baptism, because the immediate Parents Unbelief breaks off the Covenant from the next seed, and makes it void, though he was formerly in Covenant, *Rom. 11. 20, 21, 22.* where the Apostle speaks of the Gentile Churches as well as the Jews: But besides, Baptism is as Circumcision was, a seal of the Righteousness of Faith, *Rom. 4. 11.* which is invisible here in those Children which should transmit Baptism, and therefore also in the immediate seed, and so it becomes in this case a seal to a blank. Secondly, The next and immediate Parents being confederate visible Believers, excludes the remote Parents, as Grand-fathers and Grand-mothers: Considerable to this purpose is that place. *Acts 2. 38, 39.* Repent you, and let every one of you be baptized, (that is, your Children as well as you) for the promise is to you and to your Children, and to as many as the Lord our God shall call home to himself; as the word here signifies.

And let this place be duly considered, that it layes down a most clear new Testament-Institution of the Subject of Baptism, and the Restraint thereof to the next seed of such Parents as do manifest Repentance, and their effectual Calling to the charitable Judgement of the Church; and this ought to be of more weight unto us, and the Consciences of Christians, being so expresse, then any Argument that can be alledged by far fetched and uncertain Consequences out of the Old Testament.

Object. It is said, *Exod. 20.* That God shows mercy to thousands, that is, say some, to thousands of generations, therefore the Covenant Mercy is not limited to the next and immediate seed.

Answer. 1. Mr. Hooker in his survey rejects this place as impertinent



to the case in hand, and he alledgeth for his Judgement, *Calvin, Zanchy, Junius and Perkins.*

2. It is plain, that the Mercies here mentioned, stand in opposition to the Lords Jealousie, and vindictive Justice; and in this sense, Gods sparing Mercy, and Bounty in many Respects, is extended to the remote posterity of believing and godly Parents, though they be grievous sinners of themselves, as the Lord for *Dauids* sake spared many of the wicked Kings. But that hence should be inferred, that the remote Children of *Believers* should have right to Baptism, it can no more follow hence then that they have right also to the *Lords Supper*, which they that press this place will not grant.

Thirdly, The place is plainly interpreted elsewhere of those posterities that do follow the example of these godly Parents, as *Deut. 7. 9. Psal. 103. 17, 18.*

Fourthly, By the consent of all, *Exod. 20.* especially respects the *Observers* of the second Commandment; they that violate this, are counted by the Lord, *haters of him*; as they that are strict *Observers* of his instituted Worship, are in Gods account, *the lovers of him.*

Object. *The Children of the idolatrous Jews that they dedicated and sacrificed to Moloch, are said to be born to God, Ezek. 16. 20. besides those whose parents for many sins dyed in the wilderness, are taken and owned in the Covenant, Deut. 29. 12. therefore the Covenant reacheth further then the next seed.*

Ans. 1. Gods Covenant with the Jews was national, they and all their posterity were devoted to the Lord by a general Election and Adoption, *Rom. 9. 4, 5.* therefore even in their Apostacy, they might be challenged to be the *Lords* people; but now there is no such national Covenant.

2. These Children might be said to be *born to God*, i. e. that they might be the *Lords*, and so instructed as his Children, or having the outward badge of *circumcision.*

3. Yet we are sure that Circumcision was appointed to be a seal of the Righteousness, *Rom. 4. 11.* and without Faith Circumcision was made Uncircumcision, *Jer. 9. 25, 26. Rom. 2. 25.* As for the other place, *Deut. 29.* that may be considered *Heb. 3. 16.* though some of the *Israelites* did provoke God, yet not all that came out of *Egypt.* 2. Their Captains, Heads and Officers that were appointed by *Moses*, no doubt were the better sort. They were such as were *circumcised* and eat the *Passover*, *Josh. 5. 20.* that shews that there was a great change wrought in them, that *Joshaab* renews these Ordinances to them.



*The Third Proposition.*

“THE Infant-Seed of confederate visible *Believers* are *Members* of “the *same Church* with their parents; and when they are grown “up, are *personally* under the Watch and Government of the Church. In this we did not (some of us) dissent from our *Brethren*, only we would take liberty to shew our meaning about the later branch which we see hath been *interpreted*. First then, when it is said, *That they are personally under the Watch of the Church*; the meaning is not, *that they have an actual, personal and immediate Membership*, which is proper to those that are in full Communion, but only that the Church-watch, in the dispensation of it, should reach unto their persons, which was publicly expressed in the Meeting-house by us. Secondly, By Discipline we do not intend the sentence of Excommunication, which is *proper* to those Offenders that are in full Communion; and we see not how those should be cast out of full Communion that were never in it; nevertheless the Church may disown them, & declare them to be no Members, upon their deserting of the Church, and the Covenant of their Parents, by such a sentence as Peter pronounced to *Simon Magus*, Acts 8.21. saying, *Thou hast no part or lot in this business*. Thirdly, We conceive that it cannot be concluded, that all persons are to be looked upon as adult at the very same age, some persons coming to years of discretion before others; and some having weaker parts and less means of instruction than others have; therefore we see not how there can be any *particular time* fixed when all persons shall be accounted adult, (or of age) to answer for themselves at this or that age, but a latitude must be allowed in this case.

*Furthermore*, We desire to weigh (as we are able) that Assertion which is held forth, *viz.* That Church-Children which are grown up, do still continue Members of a particular Church: which as hath been said, we have entertained and yielded unto according to our Exposition thereof premised, to be a Truth of Christ.

But because upon our grant of this other unsuitable Consequents are inferred, *viz.* the following Propositions; we had the more need to clear this coast which we may do by the Answer of those Arguments, which are alledged for the proof it.

Argument 1.

“If according to Scripture persons are not broken off for being adult, “but only for notorious sins, then the Children in question are still “Members: But the former is true, *Rom. 11.20. ergo. &c.*

*Ans. 1.* Though none be broken simply for being adult, yet there are oft-times many accessaries to adult age, that according to Scripture, may justly break them off; as will after appear.



2. It is not said, *Rom. 11. 20.* That only for notorious sins, Church-Members are *broken off*.

3. Visible Unbelief gives cause of breaking off, and that is not positive, expressed by contradicting, and opposing, or notorious wickedness, but also negative, as neglecting the means of Grace, or non-manifestation of making profession of the Faith, and the fruits thereof, which many adult Children are guilty of, though not of the former positive.

4. Though your patience and expectation ought to be large and long in the later case, yet it may be tyred out at last and come to a period.

#### Argument 2.

“If the *Jewish* Children uncircumcised did not yet cease to be Members “by growing up, then Believers children now being baptized, do not cease to be Members in the like case: But the former is true, &c. any further they are not said to enter into Covenant, but to renew it, and make progress in it.

*Ans. 1.* The circumcised Jews did not cease to be Members simply for growing up, but for growing out of kind; as it is said, *Jer. 2. 21.* When as God planted them as a noble Vine, wholly a right seed, (that is, in their godly parents) yet they became the degenerate Plants of a strange vine, or bastard branches of an out-landish vine. *Amos 9. 7.* *Are not yet unto me as the Children of the Negroes, or the accursed posterity of Cham, the son of Chush:* Now such bastard branches saith our Saviour, *are to be cut off*, *John 15. 2.* Degenerate Children do stain their blood, and that is such a Reproach as no Nitre can wash away.

2. That which is denyed to be entring into Covenant, is contrarywise expresly so called, *Deut. 29. 12.* *1 Chro. 15. 12.*

#### Argument 3.

“If those Relations of Bond-Servants did not cease with Infancy, then their Membership continues in adult age; but the former is true, therefore the later also.

*Ans. 1.* The Relation of the Children of the Bond-woman might cease in adult age, as appears in *Ismael*; much more might the Relation of Bond-servants.

2. Scandal and moral wickedness upon this ground, should not cut off any adult Members, because Scandals could not cut off the relation of a Bond-servant.

#### Argument 4.

“There is no ordinary way of the cessation of Membership, but by “death, or dismissal, or excommunication, or the dissolution of the “society; therefore none of these pertaining unto these adult Children, “their Membership cannot cease.

*Ans. 1.* This is to be understood of Members in full communion, which



which the adult Children are not. 2. If it doth not hold universally of many Members for Church-Members, they may excommunicate themselves *ipso facto*, as Mr. Cotton saith in *the Way of the Churches*, p. 9. so say the Congregational men assembled in the *Savoy* in their Preface. So Ames in "*cas. conf. lib. 5. cap. 12. Schismatici non possunt provisibiliter Ecclesie membris haberi*." Farther, there is a cessation of Membership by withdrawing, which is sometimes commanded of God, 2 *Tim.* 3. 5. *Rom.* 16. 17. Lastly, There may be a cessation of Membership by Apostacy, as 1 *John* 2. 19. or by Heresy, when some turn *Arrians*, or *Quakers*, &c.

Argument 5.

"They are, when adult, members or non-members; then a person admitted a member, and not cast out, nor desiring the same may become a Non-member, which no man will affirm.

*Ans.* 1. Members and Non-members are not opposites: but with-taking in the conditions of all Opposites, as in this case (*ad idem*, or in the same respects) they may be Non-members in full Communion; and yet Members in a parental Right.

2. These Members may deserve the censures, though it be not put upon them.

3. There be other ways of the cessation of Membership, as hath been said.

*The fourth Proposition in the last Session:*

"**A** Dult persons are not therefore to be admitted to full communion, merely because they are, and continue Members without such further qualifications, as the word of God requires. This proposition hath been voted, and received by us, taking of it in this sense, that such adult persons as have not personally covenanted, are not to be admitted to full communion, because they are members without farther qualifications, &c. This no man can stick at; but if it be meant, that there are or should be in the Church such persons as have publicly and personally covenanted, that are not in full communion, this seems greatly disagreeing both to our Doctrine and general practise of the Churches, and is confuted by these Reasons.

*Reas.* 1. Because publick and personal covenanting is the formality of a church-member; and now besides matter and form, here are no more constituent causes that are required, (saith the Logician) these do compleat the definition, especially when the form is ultimate and specifical, as the Covenant is to the church: besides the noted and received Rule is, That which hath the form, hath all the consequences of it; that's the end which is the right of the *formatum* to all the priviledges belonging to such a Subject, and what communion can be more then this;



hence the form introduced, and the covenant personally owned, doth necessarily imply all priviledges belonging thereunto.

*Reas. 2.* Because adult persons in the Primitive church, (that is, such as were joyned to the church by personal covenant) did partake and contain stedfastly in full communion in all church-priviledges, *Acts 2.41.* And though voting be not mentioned here, yet *Acts 6.* in the choice of Deacons, it is sufficiently mentioned. Secondly, This Doctrine presupposeth that what knowledge, faith and repentance is required to adult persons, coming to the Sacrament of Baptism, is not sufficient for the receiving of the Lords Supper: against which we may argue;

*Reas. 2.* That Repentance, Faith, or believing with all the heart, are pre-required as necessary to the Baptism of such as are of age, *Acts 2.38, 39.* *Acts 8.37.* And what can more be required to the Lords Supper?

*Reas. 2.* Because there is as much required unto admission into Christs body, as to have benefit by his blood, *1 Cor. 12.13.* That of *Austine* is very pertinent, 'As that no man may in any sort doubt, that every one of the faithful is made partaker of the body and blood of the Lord, when in Baptism he is made a member of Christ.

*Reas. 3.* Because they which have put on Christ by Faith, have right to all church-priviledges, *Gal. 3.26,27.* but grown Believers have put on Christ by Faith.

*Reas. 4.* Because weakness of Faith, if it be true, doth not disfit a Believer to either of the Sacraments, both being appointed to be seals of the righteousness of Faith, not of a strong Faith, or of assurance only, but simply of Faith, and rather of a weak Faith, that none needs sealing and confirmation, *Rom. 14.1.* See *Hilderfarn* of the Lords Supper.

*Reas. 5.* Because Baptism and the Lords Supper are seals of the Covenant and of communion with Christ; hence Circumcision (in the place whereof Baptism is appointed, *Col. 2.11, 12.*) is called the Covenant, *Gen.17.* besides *Rom.6.* we are said to be baptized in Christs death, which cannot be without communion with him; therefore in adult persons the like conditions are required in both.

*Reas. 6.* Because in the right use of Baptism is required the stipulation of a good conscience towards God, *1 Pet. 3.21.* A good conscience cannot be without Faith, whereby our persons do please God, and our hearts are sprinkled from an evil conscience; and what can be more for the kind of true Grace then is here?

#### *The fifth Proposition.*

"Church-Members who were admitted in Minority, understanding the doctrine of Faith, and publicly professing their assent thereto,



“thereto, not scandalous in life, and solemnly owning the Covenant before the Church, wherein they give up themselves and their children to the Government of Christ in his Church, their children are to be baptized.

To consider this more fully as that which stumbles us most :

First, Let it be observed that there hath been three expressions of this Proposition, and this swerves further off from Scripture then both the former. First, In both the former it was required of these children that they should understand the grounds of Religion, but here is no more then understanding the Doctrine of Faith, so that they may be ignorant of the doctrine of the moral Law, and therefore have no knowledge of sin, which is attained only by the Law, *Rom. 3. 20.* yet this knowledge is sufficient; yea, though they have no knowledge of either the duties of Holiness, or Righteousness toward God or man; know nothing of the sanctification of Gods Name or Sabbath, nor what honour they should give to Parents, Magistrates, or Ministers, yet so they understand the doctrine of Faith; it is enough; yea though they be unacquainted with the plat-form of Prayer, or the nature, use and end of the Sacraments; yet these are not looked at as necessary: for all these grounds of Religion that were formerly comprehended.

2. Whereas in the second expression before was required, that they should be examined about their sense of their need of Christ, and desire after him, here is required no more but a bare assent to the Doctrine of Faith, this is surely a wide difference, for the Devils have the later, *James 2. 19.* But a sense of their need of Christ may argue some beginning of justifying and saving Faith, or poverty of spirit, hungering and thirsting after Righteousness, which are signes of a blessed Estate, *Matth. 5.*

3. In the second Expression, it was required (that they shall give satisfaction for any offence that they have fallen into) Here it is only required, that they are not scandalous in life: The former (*viz.* Offences) may comprehend Original sin, or any other committed against God or man, *James 3. 2.* or one act of sin; but scandal in life, denotes both some foul notorious sin, and also a curse of such sins, for the life and conversation is ordinarily so taken: if they be drunk but once, it is no scandal in life.

4. In the second Expression, it was required that they should personally (and publickly own the covenant with them in their Parents.) In the last Expression, it is said only, that they should solemnly own the covenant before the Church. These differ much, for by the former, the covenant of God with them is only in their believing Parents, which they now personally own, and publickly: But in the last, mentioning only (the



(the covenant) that may be extended to Grand-fathers, or Great-grand-fathers, or more remote believing Predecessors.

These things thus weighed may suffice to discover, whether there be not just cause for us to deny our consent to such kind of members as these are described to be?

The further Reasons of our denial of this Proposition we will abridge, reserving the further enlargement and confirmation thereof, till the Lord shall call us thereunto.

*Reason 3.* Because it crosseth the two former Propositions, which make the proper subject of Baptism confederate visible Believers and their seed: whereas the children in Question, are neither they nor their seed Believers, and though so qualified as is here expressed, for there is no more required, but understanding the doctrine of Faith, and assent thereto, &c. whereas the vilest persons may have these: as *Rom. 2. 18. Rom. 10. 19, 21.* yea those that commit the sin unto death may have these, *Heb. 10. 26.* For freedom from scandalous sins, see *2. Pet. 2. 20.* there be washed swine; For owning of the covenant, you read of the *Jewes* prophaning the covenant of their Fathers, *Mat. 2. 10.* and prophaning the holy things. *Ezek. 22. 26.*

*Object.* But their giving up themselves and their children unto God, implies faith, *2 Cor. 8. 5.*

*Ans.* It is true that it may imply it; but we say also, that when it is done by persons no better qualified, then is mentioned in the Proposition, that it cannot imply it: we find sometimes the giving up of the first born of man and beast unto God, *Exod. 13. 2, 12. Exod. 22. 29.*

*Reas. 2.* Where there is no federal holiness, there is no right to Baptism; but where neither Parent is a believer, there is no covenant-holiness, *1 Cor. 7. 14.* where not only one of the Parents must be in Church-covenant, but a Believer, that the children be federally holy; Neither is it rightly objected, that a Believer there, is opposed to his being an Infidel: for the children were not immediately upon their ceasing to be Infidels, Believers: so that either themselves were baptized, or their children federally holy; they were *Catechumen* and *competentes* before *fideles*; Besides, see the like in the Jaylor, *Acts 16. 31.* Further, let those words, *1 Cor. 7. 14.* be obscure (*else were your children unclean*) they cannot be meant only of Infidels, for so we may make mad work of Scripture; Take that place, *Deut. 4. 39.* *Jehovah is God, and there is none else*; *Isay 45. 5.* If any should say there may be another God to the *Gentiles*, though there was no other to the *Jewes*; This would be a sad exception. So *Rev. 2. 15, 15.* *Repent, or I will come against thee*, shall another Church say; thus it was with *Ephesus*, but it will not be so with us: ye there is more in the words then (*else*), *ἐπεὶ ἀγα* it is better rendred by the *Dutch Notes* (for *otherwise*) to put this further out of doubt.



*Reas. 3.* The being in covenant doth not priviledge to Baptism with one visible repentance in Parents, *Acts 2. 38, 39.* the *Jews* there were in covenant, and pricked at the heart, yet they are openly called to repent, so *John Baptist* thought, *Matth. 3. 8, 9.*

*Reas. 4.* The covenant is limited to such as obey God, and therefore the priviledges also of the covenant (as these) *Deut. 7. 9. Neh. 1. 5. Dan. 9. 5.* *He keepeth covenant and mercy to them that love him,* and this required much more then not being scandalous: yea there must be understanding of the commandements (which is not here required) before there can be keeping of them.

*Reas. 5.* From the tenure and manner of the covenant made with *Abraham*, *Neh. 9. 8.* *When God saw his heart* (the heart of *Abraham*) faithful before him, then did God make the covenant with him, and extended the same unto his seed, wherein the Spirit of God bath evident respect to the words of the covenant, *Gen. 17. 1, 7. walk before me and be upright, and I will be a God unto thee and to thy seed:* and afterwards the same is promised to *Isaac*, v. 21. when the promise is continued to his Family, *Gen. 18. 19.* When *Abrahams* children kept the way of the Lord, then the Lord brings upon *Abraham* what he had spoken of him: whence it came to passe that *Ishmael*, and the seed *Keturah* were excluded from the continuance of the covenant, because they kept not the way of the Lord; and as it was then, so it is now, *Gal. 3. 7, 9. Know ye then that they that are of the faith, are blessed with faithfull Abraham,* whereby is meant the Covenant-blessing.

*Object.* The Covenant-blessing was conveyghed with circumcision successively to the following Generations.

*Answ.* We must consider that, *Gal. 3. 14.* that is expressed to be the Blessing of *Abraham* that should come upon the *Gentiles*, not the covenant of *Jacob* (as *Mr. Cotton* hath judiciously noted upon the place) Then the Argument is: If that *Abrahams* covenant (which is continued to the believing *Gentiles*) with the blessing thereof, is confirmed to those only that walk uprightly with God, as *Abraham* did, and with them in like manner to their seed, then it is so still with the *Gentile-Churches*.

But the former is true, therefore also the latter.

*Object.* It will be said, that God promised that he would be a God to him, his seed in their generations for an everlasting covenant.

*Answ.* How is this an everlasting covenant? Is it that all the carnal seed of *Abraham* in all succeeding Generations should have God to be their God? If this be the meaning, then all the *Jews* are still in covenant with God, and they are not broken off, which is contrary to *Rom. 11.*

Therefore 1. The seed here mentioned comprehends first only such of his carnal seed with whom the covenant was established (*viz.* by walking in



in the steps of *Abrahams* faith) and 2. *Abrahams* spiritual seed, who are only intended in those words (*in their generations for an everlasting covenant*) when the *Gentiles* should be called, who should live many Generations after him in all ages of the World; the truth whereof is confirmed, *Gen.* 17. 5, 6, 7. compared together.

*Ans.* 6 It is irregular to receive persons with no better qualifications into covenant, which is here asserted; we mean ignorant, unbelieving and impenitent persons into publick and personal covenant.

3. Because such are not fit matter for the Church, i. e. visible Saints, the Matter must be prepared before the Form be introduced: Church-covenanters must be visible Saints, *Psal.* 50. 5. 16. Secondly, He reproveth the wicked for taking the covenant into their mouthes, seeing they hated Instruction, which all unregenerate persons do, *Rom.* 8. 8.

3. Because Faith, Repentance, and new Obedience are required to covenanting with the Lord: as *Esay* 44. 3, 4, 5. *Ezek.* 16. 6, 9. *Esay* 54. 4 &c. *Ezek.* 20. 35--38. *Neh.* 9. 34. 10. 38. *Jer.* 50. 4, 5.

4. It is a palpable untruth for an unbeliever to engage himself to keep the Lords covenant, whereof Faith is the condition, *John* 3. 16.

*Reas.* 7. That practice which exposeth the blood of Christ to contempt, and Baptism to prophanation, the Church to pollution, and the Commonwealth to confusion, is not to be admitted; but the baptizing of the children of such as are not visible Believers doth all this, *Ergo*.

First, It imparts the blood of the Covenant to such as are not visible Believers: for Christ represented in both Sacraments, is the blood of the everlasting Covenant, *Heb.* 9. 18, 21. and see *Dickson* on *Psalms* 50. 5. Secondly, This practice prophaneth the Ordinance of Baptism; first, because it makes a seal to a blank, *Acts* 2. 38, 39. *Acts* 8. 37. Secondly, It severs Baptism from the stipulation of a good conscience required in it, *1 Pet.* 3. 21. Thirdly, It severs Baptism from divers effects and ends of it, as the confirmation of Faith, *Rom.* 4. 11. the having a godly seed, *Mal.* 2. the pious education of children by faithfull Parents, *Gen.* 18. 19. Thirdly, This practice corrupts the Churches, because it brings the uncircumcised in heart into the Sanctuary, it brings in fellowship of light with darkness, &c. *1 Cor.* 6. 16, 17, &c. *Isa.* 55. 8. Fourthly, This practice brings the Commonwealth to confusion, because Religion and Justice, Truth and Equity, stand and fall together, and what experience have we of this, when as such persons are in any place of voting in civil affairs.

*Ans.* 8. Because these Adult children (if they were unbaptised themselves) might not be baptized in this estate, therefore they cannot entitle their seed unto it; for a man must stand possessed of a right or priviledge himself, before he can make over any thing to another: *Acts*, Conveyances, and Claynces, *a non habente potestatem*, are void in Law:—Now that which



which is required of adult persons that they may rightly partake of Baptism is, that they believe with all their hearts, *Act. 8. 37. Mat. 28. 19. Acts 10. 47. Act. 8. 12, 13.* which these adult ones not doing, are excluded from it by the word; because this is a preposterous submitting of themselves to the Government of Christ in the qualifications mentioned: Remarkable is the call of Christ, *Mat. 11. 28, 29.* When he calls sinners to take his Yoke upon them, then he will give them rest: that Yoke is the Yoke of obedience, patience and discipline (as Mr. Burroughs opens it) these are taken upon us by way of subjection thereunto; but first it must be voluntary, not enforced, we must take it upon our selves, it must not be forced or put upon us; for there will be no rest in that; but we must be a willing people. 2. We must be wearied and heavy laden with the burthen or sin and misery. 3. We must come to Christ by faith, and then take Christs burthen and yoke upon us, when we are disburthened from sin and the fruits of it: But now, when as the children in Question are required to subject themselves to the Government of Christ, this order is not observed: and therefore though they may professe subjection, yet it is but an obligation to an impossibility; neither can there be obedience without faith, *Rom. 8. 7. Heb. 11. 8.*

*Reas. 10.* Because there is but one way of entrance into the Church for all sorts of persons, which way here in this Proposition is not mentioned, and this way is Christ; we may clear it from *Joh. 10. 7.* where our Saviour saith, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep:* even Christs Elect are of themselves and by nature secluded from all access to God, and from all communion with him in grace here, and in glory hereafter; they need an open door; that imports that they are without; now it is Christ only by whom lost sinners are admitted to partake of the priviledges of his people; they must share in them through Christ, and him only.

*Quest. But what is this in respect of Church, or Church-priviledges?*

*Ans. v. 16.* compared with *v. 1.* tell us of the Sheep-fold, which is expounded of the visible Churches: he saith, *Other sheep have I which are not of this fold: them also must I bring, and they shall hear my voyce, and there shall be one fold and one Shepherd;* that is, the Gentiles which did not belong to the Church of the Jews, yet he would in due time convert and bring them in: but they must all by his own appointment enter in by the door (that is, Christ) into the visible Church: that is, they must have union and communion, and this is the very way into the Sheepfold: and it is to be noted what is said, *v. 1. Verily, verily, I say, he that entreteth not by the door into the sheep-fold, but climbeth up some other way, is a thief and a robber;* that is, that thrusteth into the Church not having part in the Lord Jesus Christ, he creeps in by a window as a Thief and a Robber.

Now let it be shewed what is here in this Proposition, that holds forth to a charitable judgement an entrance by Christ, or any personal entrance



by him; surely Church-children are born without Christ, and they must come in as all others, if there be no other door but Christ: but if they be gotten or brought in some other way into the Fold, Christ tells us that they are Thieves and Robbers; and suitable is that, *Rom. 14. 1, 3.* The Church is to receive none but whom the Lord hath received; and whom the Lord hath received, they are to receive, though they be but weak in the faith; but they must be visibly such: But what if they receive others? see then the danger of this in the Parable of the marriage of the Kings Son, *Matth. 22. 12.* When the King came in to see the Guests, he saw there a man that had not the Wedding-Garment, and we know what a wofull sentence was passed upon him, *v. 13. bind him band and foot, &c.* This came to passe because he was not cloathed with the Righteousnesse of Christ by Faith, which is there called *The Wedding-Garment*; this then being so pernicious to these children, how can the Church be blamelesse in bringing them in this way?

Thus far of the Reasons of our dissent. Now it follows to answer the Arguments alledged on the contrary for the proof of this Proposition.

Argument. 1.

"The Children in Question are partakers of the ground of Baptism, that is, the Covenant, *Gen. 17. 7. 9. 12. Col. 2. 11, 12. Acts 2. 38, 39.*

We answer, in general; That Faith is the main ground of Baptism, *Rom. 4. 11. Acts 8. 37.* so it was with those that were baptized by *John*, *Acts 19. 4.*

But in particular. 1. The Covenant is not the main ground of Baptism as is asserted.

1. Though they had *Abraham* for their Father, yet *Johns* Baptism takes away that Plea, *Matth. 3. 8, 9.* and calls for Repentance (which presupposeth Faith) with the meet fruits thereof. 2. We must distinguish betwixt the covenant of Grace and the Church-covenant, which differ very much: for the covenant of Grace belongs only to the Elect and true Believers, which the Church cannot infallibly judge who they are; but the Church-covenant (which is the next ground of the Dispensation of the Seals) requires mutual consent of them that are admitted into communion to walk with God according to the Gospel. The covenant of Grace is made to the child in the Parent, but it is established only upon the restitution of Faith and Repentance, *Gen. 17. 7, 9. Rom. 11. 20.* it is expressed, *Thou standest by faith*, speaking of the *Gentile-Churches*; they stand by Faith, therefore without Faith they fall: visible faith keepeth them in the Covenant, therefore without it they are not kept in it.

As for the proof of this, *viz.* that the Parents in Question, are still in covenant, because they were once in it, and never since discovenanted, broken off, or cut off from the Covenant Relation, which these have not been.

We



We answer: The Lord himself discovenants them, as was said, *Mat.* 3. and also *John* 8. 39. 19. 41, 42. where the Lord takes away the Plea of the Covenant, and tells them they have the Devil for their father, and do the lusts of their father: But they have not God for their Father, because they do not love the Lord Jesus Christ his only Son, *v.* 42. yet none of these were cut off by any Church-Censure. Briefly, it seems clear to us, that a man may reject the Counsel of the Lord against himself, as the Pharisees and Lawyers did, *Luke* 7. 29. 30. They disannulled and made of no force the Counsel of God, according to his wise Counsel in the Covenant, whereby to bring men to salvation, and that against themselves, that is, to their hurt and destruction, as the *Dutch Annot.* expound the place; so persons may be (as the Lawyers speak) *Felones de se*, as Reverend Mr. *Cotton* sometimes speaks in this very case, and therefore had no Right to Baptism, speaking in their discourse about the Church Covenant, *pag.* 17. *viz.* If men had not promised, and also performed in some measure of Truth their duties of Faith and Obedience unto God, they had not taken hold of the Covenant, but had discovenanted themselves, notwithstanding all the promises of God unto their Fathers or others; as instance is given in the *Ismaelites* and *Edomites* at large. See farther for this with our Elders. Lastly, There are other grounds of breaking of the Covenant, besides notorious sins, and incorrigibleness therein, as that not standing by Faith, not laying hold of the Covenant in a regular way, not bringing forth good fruit, *Mat.* 3. 10. Not doing Righteousness, *1 John* 3. 10. and *v.* 7. *Little Children, let no man deceive you; he that doth righteousness, is righteous, and none else.*

Argument 2.

"The Children in question, are either Children in the Covenant, or Strangers from the Covenant, *Ephes.* 2. 12. Either in the Church or without, *1 Cor.* 5. 12. but they are not without, or strangers from the Covenant, &c.

*Ans.* The Assumption is denied, because the Children in question discovenant themselves, not keeping the condition of the Covenant, nor walking before God, *Gen.* 17. 1. Not loving God, nor keeping his Commandments, *Deut.* 7. 9. where also the thousand generations are limited and expounded to them that love God; by which we may expound that *Psalms* 105. 8. And this is confessed in the Argument, where it is said, (provided they are Keepers of the Covenant) which the Parents in question are not, which the very Scripture alledged proves, *Deut.* 29. 25. which speaks of the forsaking of the Covenant of their Fathers; and what they do that come not up to the condition of it: It is true,



that the places mentioned, 2 King. 17.15, 20. 2 Chron. 7. ult. do shew that God rejected the Jews for notorious wickedness; seeing that 1 Sam. 15.10, 23. God may reject man not only for positive wickedness, but for sins of omission; as he rejected *Saul*, when he said, *Thou hast rejected the Word of the Lord, and he hath rejected thee*. Not believing in God, is not a notorious wickedness accounted by men; but that was the cause of the Jews rejecting, which calls in question Gods Truth, Mercy, Goodness, Power, Constancy and Justice also, Psalm 78. 22. John 3.18.

2. The Children in question, are in a state of Neutrality for the present, and such Christ accounts to be against him, as he saith, *He that is not with me, is against me; he that gathereth not with me, scattereth*; Mat. 12. 30. Rev. 3. 15, 16. They are neither hot nor cold.

### Argument 3.

“To deny the Proposition, would be first to streighten the Gospels dispensation, and to deny the extent of it as far as it was before the coming of Christ; and this is unchristian.

*Ans.* 1. This doth not streighten the Gospel dispensation, seeing that it is granted to be extended to all Nations; the Jewish were restrained to one; here both sexes have it, there but one. 2. To keep some Children from Baptism, doth no more streighten the Gospels dispensation, then keeping of the baptized Parents, especially covenanting Parents from the Lords Supper, seeing that the circumcised Jews were not debarred from the Passover. 3. Then *New-England* hath been unchristian above thirty years.

2. The Gospel-Times are in many respects times of Reformation, *Heb.* 9: 10. that is, rectifying and setting those things right and straight which were perverted by those under the first Testament; therefore to build so much upon the largeness of Jewish practises, is a great sin on the other hand, seeing it is a stretching the narrow way that leads unto life, to be as wide as the broad way that leads most unto destruction.

“The second absurdity alledged by our *Brethren*, is, that to deny the Proposition, is to *render* the Children of the Jews, when they shall be converted, in a worse condition then they were under the legal Administration, contrary to *Jer.* 30. 20. *Ezek.* 37. 25. 26.

*Ans.* 1. This absurdity is denied to follow hereupon, seeing that thus we might as well reason, that if the Jews after their calling have not an High Priest, and other Priests and Levites, and Urim and Thummin, and Temple-worship as they had before Christ, then their Estate shall be worse after conversion; will this follow, when as they have in Christ  
spiritual



spiritual graces a thousand-fold more than all this? it is true, that these things were Ceremonial and Typical; but there is the like Reason in regard of what is spoken of, in comparison of Christ and his abundant Grace.

2. Our denying the transmitting of Baptism to the Children in question, doth no more render the Jews at their conversion in a worse estate, than before under the legal Administration, than that Assertion that maintains the large extent of transmitting the Covenant to remote posterity under the legal Administration, and limits under the Gospel to the next seed.

3. Concerning the Scriptures alledged, that *Jer. 30. 20.* is spoken of the Return from *Babylon*, and that *Ezek. 37. 25.* speaks of the calling of the Jews, at which time the Lords people shall be all righteous, and no stranger shall pass through *Jerusalem* any more, and there shall be nothing to hinder the continuance of the Covenant to all posterity, as appears, *Isa. 60. 21. Joel 3. 17. Zach. 14. 20. Ezek. 44. 7. 9. Rev. 2. 1. 27.*

“The third absurdity that follows hence, is, that our Opinion denies the initiatory seal, and the application of it to such as regularly stand under the Church-Covenant.

*Ans.* The children in question do not regularly stand under the church-covenant; this is but the begging of the question; the contrary is plain from *Jer. 9. ult. Rom. 2. 28. Ezek. 44. 7, 9.*

The fourth Absurdity is, that hereupon follows the breaking of the Covenant, *Gen. 17. 9. 10, 14.*

*Ans.* To deny baptism to them that are in Covenant according to Scripture, is to break the Covenant; not else; neither doth the place *Gen. 17.* prove the Assertion: For first, the refusing to baptize one that is not regularly in Covenant, doth not break it. Secondly, Then surely there is a breach, yea a breach like the great sea, to deny communion in the Lords Supper to those that have laid hold upon the Covenant, and have given up themselves unto God by solemn profession of Faith and Repentance, which is now strongly pleaded for.

Argument 4.

“Confederate visible Believers though but in a low degree, are to have their Children baptized: but the Parents in question are such.

*Ans.* The Parents in question are not such, i.e. confederate visible Believers in the lowest degree, if we speak of true visible Faith; for that is required, *Rom. 14. 1, 3. Mat. 12. 20.*

The particular proofs are first, because Charity may observe in them sundry positive signs of Grace, and nothing evident against it.

*Ans.* This is said *gratis*, and denied by us; the second place proves not



not the Assertion, being taken from *Tii. i. 6.* Every one not accused of Rior, to be concluded to be of Faith, is not the Apostles intent, nor Orthodox; but faithfulness there seems to be taken for fidelity, as it is often, which may be in moral men.

To the Third; we say it is extraordinary to have Grace in Infancy, and therefore this can be no rule for ordinary Church-proceeding: hence to Scripture-Reputation they are not so to be reputed. To the fourth proof, it is said, that they that are regularly in the Church, are visible Believers in the account of Scripture and Truth, *1 Cor. i. 2.*

*Ans.* The Children in question are not regularly in the Church, which is thus proved: If the Children in question are regularly in the church, then in case that their Parents are dead, then the children surviving, will make a true visible church; if so, then they may enjoy all the Ordinances, (for so every true visible church may do) if so, then they have power to vote and chuse Officers, (which our Brethren deny.)

Therefore it is incredible to deny them that power when their Parents are alive, and they will not long be kept from putting of it forth, though they may be kept from it for a while. Secondly, As for the Scripture alledged, *1 Cor. 14. 33.* where mention is made of the churches of the Saints: and *1 Cor. i. 2.* where the church of *Corinth* is said to be sanctified in Christ Jesus; we say, that such as are regularly in the church, are sanctified in Christ Jesus, that is, (say the Dutch Notes) who are by "Christ and communion with him, separated from the common heap of "the world unto a church of God, the called Saints, *v. z.* not only outwardly by the word, but inwardly by the power of the holy Ghost, whereby he understands the best part of the church, that is, true Believers, of whom Christ speaks, *Acts 18. 10.* *I have much people in this place,* (speaking of *Corinth*) that is, *many elect ones by the preaching of the word to be converted*; so that by a church of Saints, primarily the better part of Saints are understood; the rest Synecdochically, though not so in Truth, yet so called; but of this something before.

5. There is this proof of the Proposition, being in covenant, and baptized, the children in question have Faith indefinitely given them in the promise, *Deut. 30. 6.* *The Lord your God shall circumcise your hearts, and the hearts of your seed.*

*Ans.* The promise of circumcising the hearts of children is indefinite, as is confessed, not universal; otherwise all circumcised or baptized ones, should be saved, thence the argument must be framed thus: Some circumcised or baptized ones are believers; but the children in question are circumcised or baptized; therefore they are believers. Or take it thus; Some baptized ones are believers; but the Romish Catholick are baptized ones; therefore, &c. Who seeth not the weakness of this!

Secondly,



Secondly, The promise of circumcising the hearts of Children, is not there indefinite as it is said, but certainly made good to them that return to God with all their hearts and souls, which is spoken of there: see the Verses before.

Object. But the circumcision of the heart, repentance, or Returning, is signified; then God promiseth no more than what they have already.

Answer. Their returning may be meant of their endeavour in the use of the means to return, and the Lords circumcising of their hearts, may, and doth signify both effectual Repentance, and the carrying on of the work of Mortification in both Parents and Children, which is signified by the circumcising of their hearts, and in this sense the place doth not concern the Children in Question.

Thirdly, An indefinite promise doth not capacitate all Children to receive the Seals.

Argument 5.

“The denial of Baptism to the Children in Question hath a dangerous tendency to irreligion and Apostacy.” Answer. Such tendency to irreligion or Apostacy by this denial of Baptism to such Children, is denied by us; and we have good experience of this through Gods mercy in New-England hitherto, that we have not fallen hitherto in thirty or forty years into Apostacy, unless we now fall into it.

Argument 6.

“The Children in Question are personal Members, &c.” Answer. If it be, that Gods promise to their believing Parents reacheth them, and that they are wrapt up in it together with their Parents, the assertion is granted as far as concerns the seed of confederating Believers in their Minority; but if the meaning be, that they are Members by their own personal act, then it is denied; as for the proofs, they are these.

Proof 1.

“They are personal Members, because they are personally holy, 1 Cor. 7. 14.” Answer. This concerns Children in Minority, or the seed of Believers and Members in such Communion; therefore it reacheth them not when adult and grown.

Proof 2.

“They are personally baptized, therefore personal Members.” Answer. So are the Children of the Papists in Rome; and are they personal Members, as the *Sechemites* and *Edomites* were circumcised; there is *par ratio*.

Proof 3.

“They are personally under Church-Discipline, and therefore personal Members: for the Church cannot judge them that are without, 1 Cor. 5. 12.” Answer. This is granted, that they are personally under Discipline with the limitation and interpretation that hath been before expressed; yet not so personal as to have right to all Church-privileges, as is confessed by all.

Proof 4.

“They are personally in a visible estate of Salvation; to say that they are not Members in their own persons, is to say that they are not saved in their own persons.”

Answer. It is granted, that they are in an estate of Salvation, and nearer to the Kingdom of God than Pagans are, but they are not visibly at the present in the state of Salvation: this distinction is grounded, *Mark 12. 34.*

But to infer thence, that if they be not Members in their own persons, but in their Parents, then they shall not be saved in their own persons but their Parents, this is utterly inconsequent;



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**REMARKS:** On, Weather obscured in the night.

**P**rinting all for natural reader possible. p. 3. A penult. for but this cause, reads *penult*.  
it could, penult. for the printed Latin verse, reads  
*quasi quatuor pars terti.* Ibid. 1. 19. for *Camus*  
and would, reads and we would. p. 6. for the Hebrew word  
**סוף** (**סוף**) and pre-ly, for *Chams* reads *Chams*. Ib. 1. 18. for  
at an extraordinary, reads at an extra-  
ordinary. p. 10. 1. 16. for *Makro* reads *Makro*. p. 20. 1. 11. for *Prophetas*  
and Apostles. p. 24. 1. 6. for interpreted, reads  
reads *exhibition*, reads *exhibition*. p. 26. 1. 11. for *exhibition*